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TAKE ONE

Godzilla...
The Monster
behind the Myth

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The National Film Board of Canada
proudly salutes
its film-makers for winning 13 Etrogs
and the first Grierson Award
at the 24th Canadian Film Awards 1972

Grierson Award
Colin Low

Le temps d'une chasse
Special Jury Award: Francis Mankiewicz, director
Best Cinematography in Feature: Michel Brault
Best Sound Recording in Feature: Claude Hazanaviscius

Best Animated Film
Dans la vie
Pierre Veilleux, director. René Jodoin, producer

Best TV Drama
Françoise Durocher, waitress
André Brassard, director Jean-Marc Garand and Pierre Duceppe, producers

Best TV Information – Public Affairs
Je chante à cheval... avec Willie Lamothe
Pierre Bernier, Jacques Leduc, Lucien Ménard, directors Paul Larose, producer

Best Theatrical Short
This Is a Photograph
Albert Kish, director. Tom Daly, producer

Best Director
(non-feature)
André Brassard
Françoise Durocher, waitress

Best Screenplay
(non-feature)
Michel Tremblay, André Brassard
Françoise Durocher, waitress

Best Sound Recording
(non-feature)
Claude Delorme
Wet Earth, Warm People

Best Cinematography
(non-feature)
Georges Dufaux
A cris perdus

Best Sound Editing
(non-feature)
Les Halman
Wet Earth, Warm People

Best Sound Re-recording
(non-feature)
Michel Descombes
This Is a Photograph

National Film Board of Canada **Office national du film du Canada**

TAKE ONE

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FEEDBACK

TAKE ONE welcomes communications from its readers, but can rarely accommodate letters over 500 words in length. The editors assume that any letter received (unless otherwise stated) is free for publication.

Armageddon on my mind

I found Michael Goodwin's discussion of the burgeoning cinematic violence [Vol. 3 No. 4] intelligent and provocative. But I think that there may be another interpretation: a disrupted society such as ours — one in the throes of social change — needs stronger catharses than it would in less stressful times; that the very films he cites as possible perpetrators of violence may, in fact, be serving a therapeutic function. Perhaps he could explore this theory in a future essay.

Charles J. Wright
Marina Del Rey, Ca.

Michael Goodwin makes a valid point early on in his "Tooling Up for Armageddon": the question should not be whether violence, but what sort of violence. A good enough observation, but not suitably strong to outweigh the alternately solemn and hysterical points he proceeds to express. Among the more fallacious:

1. "For the most part, we perceive films as dreams." I don't think so; is art after all designed to be so uselessly masturbatory? Art is necessarily a participatory venture.

2. "... the old Puritan ideology, based as it is on the concept of righteousness." Puritanism is more precisely based on submission.

3. "But cinematically, **Triumph of the Will** is a great film, too." Yes, but why that "but"? It is enough that it is cinematically great; it is no less great because it has a transparently Nazi focus.

4. "As sociology, these films are terrifying, and as art they're disastrously irresponsible." Irresponsible on whose part? and to whom? Since when has art become a public service? To regard art as something having obligations to its beholders is to make the artist into a public servant.

5. "... (the) violence of Polanski's treatment is at direct odds with Shakespeare's theme." If Polanski's vision is at odds with it, is the theme, "Violence should not be seen in close-up?" Off-stage violence was traditionally not a directly thematic effect but a theatrical convention.

6. "People without hope become violent." Then those with futures are not violent?

7. "Their main characters are evil ... we can't help identifying with them." To fear that one will espouse brutality in life because one has accepted it in an artistic framework is to expose a parochial and naively utilitarian definition of art.

There is no need for Mr. Goodwin to protect us. We didn't fear for our lives when we went on that Cinerama roller-coaster trip back in the fifties, and just because we are now trapped in the seventies is no reason to presume that we will go on raping sprees after seeing Alex do that.

Gabe Roche
Chicago, Ill.

Thank you so much, Michael Goodwin, for your Armageddon. **Clockwork Orange** is the one film in my life where I nearly left the theatre from nausea.

Granted Anthony Burgess' book is flawed by a mechanical presentation of the central character. We are not shown how the 15-year-old psychopath developed — he is a two-dimensional figure. Nevertheless Burgess poses a moral question: what do we do in the face of unmitigated evil; are we justified in removing the person's ability to make an ethical choice between evil and good?

Kubrick, in his writing of the screenplay and in his direction of the film, rather mocks the problems the book poses. He turns Alex into an underdog therefore hero. Alex's victims, whom he rapes, robs, paralyzes, scars or kills, are transformed by Kubrick into a video of vultures...

Kubrick is unabashed in using easy clichés to turn the audience against the people whose job it is to contain Alex: they are homosexual, sadistic, venomous. In the book, the gang's victims are ordinary people with their distinguishing idiosyncrasies. When Alex is faced by his victims, Kubrick's message is that the victims unleash on poor Alex their collective innate viciousness dormant in all of us, a viciousness that is worse than Alex's since it is motivated by revenge unlike the purity of violence that cannot be helped. Kubrick makes caricatures of the victims, who in the book are often society's dregs as well. The animal-loving old lady becomes an arty, physical-kultur bitch with overtones of Lesbianism (Heavens to Betsy!) whom Alex finishes by smashing her beloved penile sculpture into her mouth (fellatio ad absurdum).

Burgess asks if we have the right to take away Alex's ability to choose good or evil — in this instance by behaviour therapy. He is not concerned that it may be unworkable but that it is immoral. The book shows Alex's triumph as a tragedy for mankind, for the means to the end has made the opposite come true. The film makes Alex's victory the happy ending where the hero walks into the sunset clutching his stereo, set up for life on the government payroll, and the victims getting what they deserve. The cheering is so loud we have forgotten the odd bit of ultra-violence that the whole thing was supposed to be about.

You are so right M.G. — dazzling, beautiful, scintillating, stream-lined, tangerine-flake POISON.

Betty Issenman
Westmount, Quebec

It's not Armageddon that Michael Goodwin's tooling up for, but the great conservative backlash. His article indicates that, beneath that fashionably hairy exterior and that truly maddening prose style, there beats a heart as reactionary as all outdoors. For what is he saying? There's a lot of violence in films today. And there's lots of violence in life itself, too. Right enough. But he seems to think that the first causes the second, which is the precise opposite of the truth, with the result that any violent film immediately becomes, in his eyes, immoral, anti-social, dangerous, dirty and worthy of the pyre. He'll find lots of supporters for this line of "reasoning" — conservatives, bourgeois, fascists. It may interest him to know that members of the British Conservative Party have been the vociferous leaders of efforts to ban **The Devils** and **A Clockwork Orange** and enforce new, stronger laws concerning censorship in the arts.

He concedes that "the arguments that can be mounted in defense of these films are convincing," but, just in case we believe this, hastens to add that "all that's intellectualization." Sure it is, and we all know what these crummy pinko intellectuals are like, don't we? Mike quickly proves he isn't an intellectual by contradicting himself about whether or not the scenes of violence in **Macbeth** were in the play to begin with, by inventing a nasty scene for **Dirty Harry** which isn't in the film and, above all, by making the absurd generalisation that we in the audience always identify with the leading character(s) in a movie.

Maybe Mike Goodwin does — if so, that tells us something about *him,* but it's just not so for everyone. Never heard of alienation? Whom does Goodwin identify with in, say, **The Loved One** or **The Boys In The Band** or **Rashomon** or **Psycho** or **Cabaret**? For that matter, with whom does he connect in **Kiss Me, Deadly,** a movie he seems to admire? Mike Hammer is a stupid, nasty, incompetent, bloodthirsty, philistine crook. If a psychopath or fascist is, at some level, attractive to us, then it indicates that we are in some way similar to that character; our own moral sense (or smug security) is thus challenged. Surely only a hard-core bourgeois would think this a bad thing? I'd have thought this was all obvious, but not, it seems, to Mike Goodwin.

If TAKE ONE wants to convince us of its political sophistication, why doesn't

it stop knocking Siegel (a genuine anarchist) and Kubrick and concentrate on the immoral political content of **Che!** or **Cromwell** or **The Baby Maker** or the James Bond films? Just because they are lousy films doesn't stop them being effective.

Peter D. Richards
Essex, England

Our far flung friends

Several years too late I discovered the existence of TAKE ONE. The last few hours I've spent greadily reading back copies. What beautiful work!

Yours in Hope and Isolation.

John Hughes, "Winterbourne"
Mountain Road, Cockatoo, Australia

Will you kindly increase our standing order for TAKE ONE... Despite the recent increase in price, as well as realignment of currencies, TAKE ONE appears to have established itself in this country.

I personally enjoy TAKE ONE very much and I circulate a couple of copies to our local film critic and a local executive of a film distributor who realises that film can be an art form!

Keep on with the good work!

J.E.C. Mullen, Tropez (Pty) Ltd.
Sea Point, C.P., South Africa

I hope TAKE ONE keeps on doing well. It is the one Canadian magazine (I am Canadian) that can hold its own with any periodical publication in the States or Europe. It is neither too boringly academic nor too mindlessly popular. Keep up the good work!

Mario Relich
Edinburgh, Scotland

FESTIVALS AND COMPETITIONS

On the occasion of its twenty-fifth anniversary, the Ontario Film Association (the OFA) is sponsoring a **design competition** for a permanent logo. The OFA comprises film librarians, public librarians, audio-visual personnel, educators, and private citizens with a general interest in motion pictures. The organization's emphasis is on the promotion and use of 16mm film for educational, cultural and recreational purposes. Any resident of Ontario may enter; the winner will receive $50. Official entry forms are available from: The Secretary, Ontario Film Association, Box 521, Barrie, Ontario.

The Ann Arbor Film Co-op (P.O. Box 8, Ann Arbor, Mich. 48107) is sponsoring an 8mm film festival February 2 through 4. All non-professional regular 8, super 8, and single 8 films will be accepted. An entry blank (obtainable from the above address) and a three-dollar fee are required of each film entered. Deadline is January 17. Prize awards are expected to exceed $400.

A Canada-wide student 16mm film festival is being organized by the **Media McGill Project** (3434 McTavish Street, Montreal 112, Quebec). Categories are: "Comedy-Erotic" and "Social Conscience"; and over $1000 (plus a trophy) are to be awarded. Deadline for entries is February 1.

Movies on a Shoestring, The Rochester International Amateur Film Festival, is looking for films for its fifteenth annual show (May 4 and 5 in Rochester, New York). Films on any subject (b&w or color, silent or sound, 8mm or 16mm) may be submitted, with the only stipulation being that the film not have been made for theatrical or commercial entertainment. Closing date for submissions is March 17. For additional information and application forms, write: Movies on a Shoestring, P.O. Box 7604, Rochester, N.Y. 14622.

It has been announced that some 45,-000 Deutchmarks in prize money is to be awarded at the 19th **International Festival of Short Films** in Oberhausen, to be held April 9 through 14 of next year. To be kept informed: Westdeutche Kurzfilmtage, Schwartzstrasse 71, 42 Oberhausen 1, West Germany.

The American Film Institute has announced that, under the **Independent Filmmaker Program,** it will be awarding $100,000 in March of next year (in individual awards of up to $10,000 to US citizens or permanent residents on acceptance of a proposal for any type of film project in either 16mm or 35mm). Interested parties should apply to: The American Film Institute, 501 Doheny Road, Beverly Hills, Calif. 90210.

HELP!

Our biggest problem right now is getting TAKE ONE out to where people can buy it — as you know if you've ever tried to find us on the stands. We do our own distribution — mailing the magazine directly to retail outlets — and we're getting to more all the time, but the more outlets we know about the easier it will be for you to find us.

If there's a store near you where TAKE ONE ought to be but isn't, you can do us an invaluable service by sending us its name and address, or even asking them to stock the magazine. We're primarily interested in campus bookstores, head shops, counter-culture media centers and stores that specialize in film publications, but use your imagination. If we sell a store that you told us about, we'll send you something neat — we don't know exactly what yet, but it'll be something worth having.

We're all in this together, and we need your help. It may make it a little easier for you to buy TAKE ONE next issue. Send the dope to TAKE ONE, Box 1778, Station B, Montreal 110, Quebec.

CLASSIFIEDS

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The American Film Institute's latest creations...

Alfred, an aged Black gentleman, bubbles with wit despite the squalor of his New York welfare hotel room. 30 minutes from Peter Barton and Laurence Salzman.

B&W. Sale $300. Rental $30.

Ann, A Portrait of Ms. Halprin, the unique modern dancer who integrates her art and her personal life so fully that one becomes the other. 24 minutes from Constance Beeson.

Color. Sale $250. Rental $25.

A Berkeley Christmas chance encounter grows into love between a free California girl and an uptight young Eastern establishmentarian. 47 minutes from Frank Dandridge.

Color. Sale $500. Rental $45

Black Mass is held with visions, fancies and illusions in a cavernous world of total evil. 16 minutes from Frederick Chandler.

B&W. Sale $175. Rental $17.50.

Brown Rice is a staple in the ever-changing world of high school kids, who speak their feelings openly. 28 minutes from Andy Burke.

Color. Sale $300. Rental $30.

Camden, Texas is a company town, a small quiet way of life doomed by economic forces. 22 minutes from James Bryan.

Color. Sale $250. Rental $25.

The Children of pampered America and ravaged Vietnam contrasted in superimposed color/b&w images. 7 minutes from Gerard Malanga.

Color. Sale $80. Rental $10.

College Daze hits our hero as he makes it through freshman registration and into a loss of virginity. 29 minutes from Tom Berman, Andrew Halper, Robert Halper.

B&W. Sale $300. Rental $30.

Taking Care of Business keeps an ex-con, ex-addict out of prison and working for reform. 50 minutes from Robert Kaylor.

Color. Sale $450. Rental $45.

The Tell-Tale Heart haunts the murderer in this new interpretation of the Edgar Allen Poe thriller. 26 minutes from Steve Carver.

Color. Sale $275. Rental $25.

Theorists Room has a single window through which a seemingly ageless invalid gleans strange, bleak perceptions of the human condition. 20 minutes from Tom Palazzolo.

Color. Sale $250. Rental $20.

Under the Juggernaut plays lightning-fast collages of assasination figures against a wild sound track. 9 minutes from Robert Russett.

Color. Sale $125. Rental $12.50.

Watersmith turns a swimming practice into an aquatic symphony through skillful editing and montage. 32 minutes from Will Hindle.

Color. Sale $325. Rental $35.

The "What Did You Think of the Movie?" Movie satirizes movie criticism through comments of people leaving a theatre. 15 minutes from Jeremy Kagan.

Color. Sale $175. Rental $15.

What Fixed Me pioneers new storytelling techniques in a modern drama of rural mountain men. 20 minutes from Thomas Rickman.

Color. Sale $250. Rental $25.

Deathstyles translates everyday scenes into acid comment on our dehumanizing times. 50 minutes from Richard Myers.

Color. Sale $500. Rental $50.

Frankenstein in a Fishbowl is the sad image of two middle-aged women driven to plastic surgery by our culture's youth-and-beauty values. 43 minutes from Barry Pollack.

Color. Sale $450. Rental $45.

The Grandmother materializes in the fantasies of a small lonely boy. Insights into the world of childhood which seem far more real than our time-dimmed memory of it. 34 minutes from David Lynch.

Color. Sale $350. Rental $30.

Imogen Cunningham, Photographer pays homage to the pioneering portraitist, now in her 80's. A look at her work, her vitality, her unique radiance. 20 minutes from John Korty.

Color. Sale $250. Rental $25.

Implosion occurs as a marriage and its partners dissolve. Acting, music and mannerisms reminiscent of old Hollywood two-reelers. 20 minutes from Dick Bay.

B&W. Sale $250. Rental $25.

Lanton Mills spoofs the Western genre as two horsemen try a bank stickup in modern Beverly Hills. 18 minutes from Terry Malick.

Color. Sale $200. Rental $20.

Living Off the Land is a meager subsistence for the family of a New York City junkpicker who wants to be his own boss. 32 minutes fro Bruce Davidson.

Color. Sale $325. Rental $35.

The Picture follows a young loser, fumbling through a romantic proposition. Bittersweet comedy à la "The Graduate." 16 minutes from Ken Laurence.

Color. Sale $175. Rental $17.50.

Porch Glider surveys the world from the furniture's point of view—from child's play by day to lovemaking by night. 25 minutes from James Herbert.

Color. Sale $275. Rental $25.

Quick Billy makes spiritual progress in this abstract interpretation of the Tibetan Book of the Dead. 40-plus minutes from Bruce Baillie.

Color. Sale $450. Rental $45.

Razor Blades assults the senses from a split screen, achieving the impression that "opposites" are simply halves of a full circle of being. 25 minutes from Paul Sharits.

Color. Sale $275. Rental $25.

Sticky My Fingers, Fleet My Feet was an Oscar nominee and Cine Gold Eagle winner. Pathos and humor in a middle-aged football game. 23 minutes from John Hancock.

Color. Sale $250. Rental $25.

Still? explores our methods of perception, smoothly wavering between past and present. 13 minutes from Howard Smith.

Color. Sale $150. Rental $15.

Slice of Gold is a sequel to **Still?,** continuing Smith's concern with past and present by capturing both at once. 6½ minutes from Howard Smith.

Color. Sale $75. Rental $10.

Summer Journal of an art school in Maine gives insight into the creative process. 43 minutes from Richard Notkin.

Color. Sale $500. Rental $50.

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TAKE ONE

The News Page

The truth 24 times per second.

The second issue of **Women & Film** is now available (at 75¢ a copy) from either 2022 Delaware, Berkeley, Ca. 94709 or 2802 Arizona Ave., Santa Monica, Ca. 90404. It features an extensive analysis of the First International Festival of Women's Films, plus "Reflections on Recent Trends in Hollywood Films", and an examination of the films of Douglas Sirk, as well as reviews, etc., etc.

Sam Peckinpah has firmly signed James Coburn and Kris Kristofferson to play the title roles (respectively) in **Pat Garrett and Billy The Kid**. Jon Voight had earlier been picked for the latter role.

Al Lapidus, who is head of his own **popcorn** company, has revealed that X-rated pictures are very bad for popcorn and candy sales. Apparently, the more tension-filled the film, the greater the sales. Thus, melodrama, crime and horror pictures sell more popcorn than do X-rated films, musicals and **Love Story**. Lapidus theorizes that nervous, on-edge people have to keep their hands and mouths busy. (Lapidus also revealed that the average box of popcorn has 140 calories, while a candy bar has a whopping 350.)

Conrad Rooks is apparently having some trouble finding a distributor for his latest film, **Siddhartha** (see the interview with Rooks in our Vol. 3 No. 5), despite very favourable reactions at both the Venice and San Francisco film festivals. He is asking distributors to pay his $1,300,000 negative costs and also guarantee a further $1,000,-000 for promotion.

Since Charlie Chaplin's **Limelight,** though twenty years old, had not opened in the Los Angeles area before 1972, could the film technically qualify for this year's Oscars?

From *The Hollywood Reporter*

THANK YOU, CBS

for the massacre of my movie, "THE PICASSO SUMMER," shown Aug. 4 on the 11:30 "Late Night Movie" slot."

You sure as hell wouldn't have bought the movie if what you first saw was your own version of it.

You cut virtually one-third of the film, including the Bullfight, the whole story continuity, the entire animated EROTICA sequence, and chopped up the "WAR and PEACE" animation at the precise moment of transition from WAR to PEACE. Brilliant. How did you do that?

I understand you plan a second showing. Do us both a favor, and forget it.

Love,

WES HERSCHENSOHN

UA has announced the publication of their new 16mm catalog. In addition to bringing up-to-date UA's own list of features now available in 16mm (including 180 UA films never before released non-theatrically, like **China Doll, The Indian Fighter, The Apache** — directed by Robert Aldrich — and **The Kentuckian**) the beautifully-designed 200-page catalog lists and describes some 750 pre-1950 Warner Bros. features for which UA has rights. These include some 500 films never before available in 16mm, among them **Wild Boys of the Road, Dawn Patrol, Dangerous Female** (the original **Maltese Falcon**), **Noah's Ark** (an early Curtiz film), **The Singing Fool** (starring Al Jolson), Bogart's **To Have and Have Not,** and **The Verdict** (directed by Don Siegel). Not the least of the catalog's highlights is the international world premiere of a two-million dollar motion picture that has never before been released — **The Adventures of Gerard**, starring Claudia Cardinale and Eli Wallach. The catalog is free. Write: Donald Krim, United Artists 16, 729 Seventh Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10019.

The recent introduction of **standard time** in Arizona, and the consequent elimination of daylight hours, has resulted in a 30% increase in business for drive-ins, and a 15% increase for conventional theatres.

Donald Siegel has signed a new five-year, non-exclusive producer/director contract with Universal that calls for him to make at least five new films.

Andy Warhol had almost convinced **Rita Hayworth** to take the lead in his **Heat** (in fact the role was specifically written for her) when George Cukor talked her out of it.

Michelangelo Antonioni will soon be shooting his first feature since **Zabriskie Point**: Oliver Reed and Dominique Sanda are set to star in the Carlo Ponti production of **Technically Sweet**, to be filmed in the Ivory Coast.

The **International Index to Film Periodicals** (which indexes 67 magazines, including *Sight & Sound, Iskusstvo Kino, Cahiers du Cinéma, Film Quarterly*, and us) is now available in the form of standard 5x3 library cards. Subscription price for the approximately 8000-9000 cards which are expected to be issued in 1973 is $325 (outside Europe) and $300 (within Europe). The cards (which index articles by film titles, personalities and subject) will be mailed in batches several times a week. Inquiries should be addressed to The Danish Film Museum, Store Sondervoldstraede, 1419 Copenhagen K., Denmark. (The R.R. Bowker Co. of New York will be publishing the index in book form in annual volumes, starting with the 1972 index in spring 1973.)

The 1972 **San Francisco Film Festival** ended in unusually dramatic fashion with the firing of Program Director Albert Johnson. Johnson spoke up unexpectedly at the final Festival press conference, referring to a history of "intimidation" at the hands of the Festival Committee. He called for a meeting at which his complaints would be further specified, and stated that if such a meeting were not held he would be forced to resign. A few days later, Executive Director Claude Jarmon issued a press release noting that Johnson's resignation had been accepted (Johnson claims that he never resigned, but merely called for a meeting). Among other issues, the Committee is reportedly displeased with Johnson's insistence that the afternoon events (directors' tributes, retrospectives, etc.), which he originated, remain free as valuable community events. Johnson had been with the Festival (the oldest in the US) since 1965, and has called for an international boycott and Jarmon's resignation.

Salisbury State College (Salisbury, Maryland 21801) is to begin (January 1973) publishing a new journal, **Literature/Film Quarterly.** The first issue is to be devoted to film adaptations of D.H. Lawrence. Managing Editor is Thomas L. Erskine; subscriptions are $5 a year.

Criticising recent imitations of foreign films and an exaggerated attention given to screen types lacking moral principles, the Kremlin has announced the dismissal of Alexei Romanov, chairman of the Cinematography Committee. A decree published at the same time attacked the work of the **Soviet cinema,** saying it was not doing enough to show social, economic, and cultural changes in the Soviet Union. Mr. Romanov's successor is Filipp Yermash, previously deputy head of the cultural department of the Communist Party's Central Committee.

NEXT ISSUE:

Griffith's talkies,
Joseph Losey on Trotsky,
the Karlovy Vary and Pula festivals,
and
a groundbreaking interview with Howard Hawks!

2021

GRIFFITH IN HOLLYWOOD

by John H. Dorr

Hollywood gloss was never glossier than in the last years of the 1920s. The talkies had arrived, and the practitioners of the silent film form, faced with obsolescence, struggled to shame the early sychronized films by pushing silent production values to new heights of visual beauty.

It was a glorious, but doomed, struggle. While the most prestigious silent productions were consistently dying at the box office, the most mediocre talkies were triumphing. Into this atmosphere of chaotic transition came D.W. Griffith.

Griffith made his last three silent films **(Drums of Love, The Battle of the Sexes,** and **Lady of the Pavements)** under the aegis of this struggling Hollywood studio system. While the latter two contained synchronized songs and sound effects, these films were essentially conceived as silent. They suffered the same fate as the other non-talkies of the era and fell into immediate obscurity.

As much as we associate Griffith with the origins of the Hollywood narrative film, he had not been particularly involved in the growth of the Hollywood studio system. In fact, he was an outsider to this system — which was antagonistic to the methods of production which he had evolved as an independent producer.

Griffith left Hollywood in 1919 when he established his own studios in Mamaroneck, New York. He worked independently until 1925, at which time he joined Paramount Pictures (at their Long Island, New York studios) as a salaried director. Thus, it was not until 1927, after having prematurely terminated his contract with Paramount because of excessive production interference, that Griffith returned to Hollywood to work for neophyte mogul Joseph Schenck's Art Cinema Corporation, part of then-glamorous United Artists.

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Lupe Velez in Lady of the Pavements

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to chide the Hollywood system nor to demean Griffith's artistic integrity. As with the studio work of such directors as Hawks, Walsh, Dwan and Ford, Griffith's Hollywood films are triumphs of a deep and evolving personal vision gracefully realized within the conventions and genres of the studio system.

On a personal level, however, Griffith's Hollywood experience was extremely difficult. It was doubtless his treatment at the hands of Schenck and his associates (especially on the production of Griffith's subsequent all-sound film, **Abraham Lincoln**) that resulted in the discontinuation of Griffith's career in 1931 with the heart-breaking commercial failure of his last independently produced film, **The Struggle.**

But whatever Griffith's personal anguish might have been, it did not compromise his artistic vision. The resultant films are certainly unlike anything else he ever produced; and, because each is unique to his oeuvre, it would be pointless to classify or compare them with our notion of typical Griffith projects. **Drums of Love** (1928) is an explicitly sexual working of a classical tragedy based on the story of Paolo and Francesca. **The Battle of the Sexes** (1928) is a very dark comedy dealing with the disintegration of a middle class urban family. **Lady of the Pavements** (1929) is a high style costume romance, a variation of the Pygmalion story.

On the surface, it is difficult to see the continuity between these three films and the rest of Griffith's career. With his last film for Paramount (**The Sorrows of Satan,** 1926), Griffith had come full circle in his transformation of actress Carol Dempster from enigma to archetype, while his directorial emphasis had moved from narration to characterization. As he evolved from story-teller to humanist, his style moved from didactic to anecdotal. Through the Dempster persona, Griffith had come to see the world of the 20s with the same affection with which he had visualized the pre-war world through the persona of Lillian Gish.

At this peaceful juncture of the director-actress (creative-receptive) relationship, Griffith's career was disrupted by the split from Paramount; and whatever personal relationship he had with Dempster had terminated as she married a man more her own age, and retired from acting. These events left Griffith with no choice but to explore new territory. Hollywood, in 1927 full of the activity and talent of a vigorous new industry, was ripe territory for a new beginning.

His recent films had not earned the spectacular profits that were associated with his name and reputation, and most of the industry believed that Griffith was living in the past. Joseph Schenck, however, was convinced that within the context of the studio system, Griffith could be guided to produce films sufficiently conventional to promise a reliable profit. This was the studio's single mandate. Griffith was aware of Schenck's mandate, and himself needed to fulfill it. Before he could return to more pretentious production, he had to prove himself to the young industry which no longer embraced him as the leading master of its trade. Murnau had arrived with his moving camera, and Lubitsch with his sophistication. Hollywood technicians were trained in a world vision that regarded lyricism as old hat. The fact that Griffith chose these three untypical projects indicates the degree to which he was willing, and interested, to cooperate with his new employers.

In fact, before beginning a project of his own, Griffith agreed to shoot additional scenes for, and re-edit, another Art Cinema production, **Topsy and Eva,** originally directed by Del Lord and starring the Duncan Sisters. Schenck was reported pleased with Griffith's improvements. No prints of this film are known to exist.

Contrary to historical rumor, there was no studio interference on Griffith's first three Art Cinema projects. While the choice of projects had to be approved by Schenck, they were suggested by Griffith. The casting was also Griffith's choice. The resources of the studio were made available to him, and Griffith's decisions were largely followed.

The subject of Griffith's first Hollywood film was sex. Other flapper-age directors were playing with sexual innuendo. Griffith would be more direct. He chose to rework the basic myth of sexual attraction, the story of Paolo and Francesca from Dante's *Divine Comedy.* To gain peace between warring factions in 19th century Latin America, a young girl of royalty (Mary Philbin) is married to an older and crippled duke (Lionel Barrymore), only to fall in love with the duke's younger brother (Don Alvarado) while the duke is off waging war.

A biographical predisposition to this story can be imagined on Griffith's part in his own inevitable loss of the affections of Carol Dempster to a younger man. It is Griffith's resignation to this inevitability of sexual attraction that renders his treatment of **Drums of Love** moving and sympathetic, instead of merely sensational.

Griffith's interest in inventive narration almost disappears with this film. The story itself is of the utmost simplicity, moving on a straight line toward tragedy, with the lovers dying together for their sins. Griffith's emphasis is entirely on passion and its visual reverberations. Elaborate sets, lushly lighted and photographed, equally elaborate costumes, and a large cast of extras all blend into a heavily-felt background, surrounding the lovers with decorative decadence. The overall effect, both in look and function, forecalls such Von Sternberg films as **The Scarlet Empress.** Griffith declared: "We have come closer than ever before to painting with light."

The cameraman on **Drums of Love** was Karl Struss, a highly sophisticated pictorialist, fresh from an initiation into the complexities of the moving camera as co-photographer of Murnau's **Sunrise.** The subtle tonalities of his work with filters and glass process shots is a complete departure from the utilitarian images of Billy Bitzer, or the soft focus of Hendric Sartov (Lillian Gish's favorite cameraman). The set designer was William Cameron Menzies, a master Hollywood expressionist. And the two lovers, Mary Philbin and Don Alvarado, were second-string Hollywood stars whose main attributes were decorative and sexual. In short, Griffith was immersing himself in the inherent qualities of those raw materials which Hollywood could best provide.

Griffith's primary concern in most of his work had been with the spiritual life of his characters. Obviously, he did not consider the erotic as a high moral option. Yet, **Drums of Love,** in its overwhelming sensuality, proves that the erotic was not foreign to Griffith's experience. He was a spiritualist by choice. That he chose for once to indulge in sensuality is the exception that proves the rule. Only a director with a commitment to the nobility of man could detail the carnality of man with the knowing sympathy of **Drums of Love.**

Drums of Love, in form, is a classical tragedy, and is the closest Griffith ever came to adapting this essentially theatrical form to the medium of film. When this exercise

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in tragedy met with a luke-warm audience reaction, Griffith reshot the ending. In the new ending the lovers live, repentant and forgiven for their sins, to face life with a renewed spirituality. In making this concession to the lower common denominator of mass audience taste, Griffith gave up his purity of form, but achieved a catharsis more accessible to his audience.

In Griffith's public statements at the time, he noted that the requisites of the mass audience precluded the requisites of high art. But it was the communication of the moral basis of his narratives that lay closest to Griffith's heart. Only a select few would appreciate the intellectual austerity of the pure tragic form. In order to evoke a catharsis in the mass audience, the salvation and expiation of the lovers had to be spelled out explicitly. Thus it was during his Hollywood period that Griffith finally laid to rest his old pretensions (i.e. realized that respectability is *not* a desirable goal for an artist) and embraced the more conventional virtues of the Hollywood ethic.

Every medium has its own distinct forms, and it was Griffith himself who defined the American silent film form. In an article in *Theater Magazine* (October, 1927), Griffith wrote: "Most motion pictures are adapted from stage plays and books. The ways of expression used in pictures are different from plays and books. People think in words. It will be a long time before people will think in terms of pictures. Ideas are alright for stage people, but pictures prefer simple, straight stories of facts."

As an expression of his changing outlook, Griffith added: "In comedy, people will accept truth more than in tragedy. In comedy, we can exhibit (a character's) shortcomings and have the audience enjoy it. In drama, the audience does not tolerate that. It demands the conventional virtues."

Griffith's second Hollywood film, **The Battle of the Sexes,** is his most perverse film. Just as Hawks' comedies are inversions of his moral system, so **The Battle of the Sexes,** ostensibly a comedy, is a complete inversion of previous Griffith characters and situations. That Griffith was consciously and purposefully inverting his earlier thematic preoccupations is clearly indicated in that **The Battle of the Sexes** is a remake of a film which Griffith had made, in 1913, as a melodrama.

The story concerns the successful attempts of a gold-digger (Phyllis Haver) to land a wealthy upper middle class businessman (Jean Hersholt), while the businessman's family life crumbles. If Griffith were still the Victorian that critics imagined him, he would have portrayed the family sympathetically while condemning the gold-digger as a fallen woman. The opposite is the case. The family is grotesque: an obese father, a weepy, sentimental mother, and two mawkish, stereotyped 1920s teenagers. On the other hand, the gold-digger and her boy friend (Don Alvarado) are the most vital and interesting characters in the film.

Our opening view of Griffith's 1928 "happy family" is a surprise birthday party for "Mumsy" in which the decadence and stilted complacency of the idle rich are suffocatingly portrayed. The mother makes a wish "that life would go on like this forever," and immediately we know that this is precisely what cannot happen. The family has great difficulty in blowing out the candles on her cake. "Gee, Mumsy, you don't get your wish."

Ostensibly, the interfering force is the gold-digger; but, in reality, she is only the catalyst that activates the decay already inherent in the family. While the structure of the narrative is more capricious than that of **Drums of Love,** the sequence of events is no less inevitable. As in **Drums of Love,** the catharsis of a happy ending does not compromise Griffith's vision, nor in any way negate the precision with which he analyzes the sickness of his contemporary world — the Roaring '20s before the Crash.

Since the gold-digger and her boyfriend are cheating only the decadent and wealthy, their deceptions are treated with the same sense of humour that winked at W.C. Fields' "old Army game" in Griffith's **Sally of the Sawdust.** Griffith invariably sides with the victims of poverty, and condones whatever means they must seize for survival. Thus it is not surprising that Phyllis Haver's gold-digger recalls any number of spirited and rebellious Carol Dempster roles. Don Alvarado, as her boyfriend, is delightfully perverted; and we are reminded that Griffith was also a master director of men. Basking in sensuous inactivity, Alvarado is the ultimate pimp. A title refers to him as "perfumed ice." When, at the conclusion, Alvarado and Haver are left alone to cheat only each other, the good-natured humor of the situation is much like that of Lubitsch's **Trouble In Paradise.**

As if in reaction to the visual lushness of **Drums of Love, The Battle of the Sexes** is set entirely in cold, barren, urban

interiors (again designed by William Cameron Menzies). The sole exterior is the mother's nostalgic memory-flashback to the simple days of her courtship. It is a hazy, full shot, reminiscent of **True Heart Susie,** of a couple walking hand-in-hand down a tree-lined road. Griffith was asked to write an article at the time on "What Is Beauty in Motion Pictures." He replied: "There are probably very few nowadays interested in beechwood trees and pastoral scenes, so I wish I could turn the article over to someone who knows how to write for the public."

Except for this one shot in **The Battle of the Sexes,** Griffith abandoned both the naturalism of his early work and the impressionism of **Drums of Love.** The photography (again by Karl Struss) is uniformly high key, and the images are pared to a severe simplicity. The overall effect is of cold indifference. A nightclub set, with its motif of valentine hearts, appropriately mocks the frantic activity of those who frequent the club looking for the fulfillment that the barren apartment decor of their homes refuses them. There is no escape, and only a mockery of love, to be found here.

Griffith makes wider use of studio techniques than in any previous film, with optical dissolves (to indicate passage of time) and free camera movement (pans and dolly shots). Cameraman Struss recalls how Griffith enjoyed positioning himself behind the operator on the dolly, to call out instructions to his actors as the dolly was manoeuvered about the set. This complex dollying in and out, especially in argument scenes, has a sea-sick effect expressive of Griffith's response to the melodrama of his story.

While both **Drums of Love** and **The Battle of the Sexes** work toward affirmative cathartic resolutions, neither of these films are animated with the spirituality that we usually associate with Griffith. They are both voyages through darker preoccupations in which intimations of immortality, though implicit, are not dramatized. But with **Lady of the Pavements,** his third Hollywood film, Griffith achieves a state of visual and emotional grace that marks the flowering and fulfillment of his experimentation with the Hollywood ethic of mass entertainment. Like **True Heart Susie,** Griffith's most perfectly realized film of his Lillian Gish period, **Lady of the Pavements** is a simple love story executed with a purity of emo-

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tion made possible only by a complete relaxation of pretension. The beauty of this film is achieved through an acceptance of the studio ethic, not in spite of that ethic.

Again, Griffith was making the most of the raw materials that Hollywood had to offer; but, what had been decorative in **Drums of Love** and severe in **The Battle of the Sexes,** becomes luminous and transcendent in **Lady of the Pavements.** The look of the film is one of white-on-white. Struss's high-key photography, Menzies' elegant sets, equally elegant costumes, and two of Griffith's most photogenic women (Lupe Velez and the inscrutable Jetta Goudal) are the raw materials from which Griffith evokes this "love song." (**Love Song** was a working title for the project; and a synchronized version featured several scenes of Lupe Velez singing Irving Berlin's haunting "Where Is the Song of Songs For Me.")

The setting is Paris, 1868; and we are dealing with high court intrigues. A beautiful countess (Goudal) seeks revenge on a former suitor (William Boyd) by hiring a lowly cabaret entertainer (Velez) to impersonate a "lady." When Boyd falls in love with Velez, and vice versa, Goudal exposes Velez's dubious background. But the whole affair backfires; and it is the reputation of the countess that is destroyed, love triumphing over class distinctions.

Griffith's transformation of his "lady of the pavements" moves from the raucous antics of the cabaret singer to the quiet grace of the lady of the court. The emotions involved are heightened by alternating scenes of melodrama and very physical comedy — as when Velez does not hesitate to wrestle any male (including a delightfully outraged Franklin Pangborn) who offends her fancy. Again, one is reminded of Carol Dempster kicking and fighting her way through **Sally of the Sawdust** and **That Royle Girl.** In fact, one can imagine that Griffith was capsulizing his whole experience with Dempster into this single transformation of Velez. The role of Pygmalion was not unfamiliar to Griffith, the creator of the silent screen's most beautiful Galateas.

What results is a work of the highest emotional strength — a celebration of the intricate beauties of human nature and the ecstacies of human emotion. And it is toward the expression of this emotion that the camerawork is directed in graceful dollies and tracking shots (worthy of Max Ophuls) about huge open sets.

Of his three Hollywood projects, **Lady of the Pavements**

originated least with the Griffith organization, and yet it was the project Griffith wanted most to do. **Drums of Love** and **The Battle of the Sexes** were conceived and executed quickly to fulfill Griffith's financial and contractual obligations and, one can imagine, were relatively simple challenges for Griffith to stage and shoot. **Lady of the Pavements,** however, had been the first project that Griffith intended to shoot at Art Cinema, but it had to be postponed when debts pressured him into production before the **Pavements** project was ready.

In 1927, in response to a favorable review of **Sorrows of Satan,** Griffith had written: "The years teach us that the best reward is the reward of appreciation and understanding.

Drums of Love (1928) Directed by D.W. Griffith; scenario by Gerrit J. Lloyd; photographed by Karl Struss; sets by William Cameron Menzies; edited by James Smith; 9 reels. Produced for Art Cinema Corporation, released by United Artists. With: Mary Philbin, Lionel Barrymore, Don Alvarado, Tully Marshall, Eugenie Besserer, Charles Hill Mailes, Rosemary Cooper, Joyce Coad. Print Source: George Eastman House, Rochester, New York.

The Battle of the Sexes (1928) Directed by D.W. Griffith; scenario by Gerrit J. Lloyd, based on "The Single Standard" by Daniel Carson Goodman; photographed by Karl Struss; sets by William Cameron Menzies; edited by James Smith; synchronized music arranged by R. Schildkret; 10 reels. Produced for Art Cinema Corporation, released by United Artists. With: Jean Hersholt, Phyllis Haver, Belle Bennett, Don Alvarado, Sally O'Neil, William Bakewell, John Batten. Print Sources: George Eastman House, Rochester, New York; John Hampton, The Silent Theater, Los Angeles.

Lady of the Pavements (1929) Directed by D.W. Griffith; scenario by Sam Taylor, based on a story by Karl Volmoeller; photographed by Karl Struss; sets by William Cameron Menzies; edited by James Smith; music arranged by Hugo Reisenfeld. Produced for Art Cinema Corporation, released by United Artists. With: Lupe Velez, William Boyd, Jetta Goudal, Albert Conti, George Fawcett, Henry Armetta, William Bakewell, Franklin Pangborn. Print Source: The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

It is much more fun to actually please the people that understand than it is to please the people as a whole, which, as you know, is an impossible task."

Griffith wanted, above all, to be understood — because he had a message to convey that needed to be understood. He was never interested in simply helping a mass of people pass their time. Yet he had found that his own devices and mannerisms were now getting in the way of reaching all but a small audience (as is often the case with the late work of major artists). The inherent self-abnegation of interpreting a project which did not originate in his own devices and mannerisms (the scenario for **Lady of the Pavements** was prepared by Sam Taylor, an affable United Artists hack) was Griffith's conscious step toward wider understanding.

Griffith wrote (in *Liberty Magazine*): "In motion pictures, Beauty is the pleasing presentation of the thing for which people are yearning. This is what the motion picture producer must try to approach: those memories of beauty we all have deep within us. That is the beauty for which we yearn."

It is this sense of spiritual yearning that animates **Lady of the Pavements** and conveys Griffith's "message." Continuing (in a radio speech on "Success"), Griffith stated: "The only success that any human being can have is within themselves. When we all have understanding within ourselves (and sympathy), then you can bet your last dollar that you will have the nearest thing to happiness itself. And when all of us get this within ourselves, there will be no more wars and very little hatred and about as near paradise as anyone can dream of."

Griffith's career was devoted to externalizing, on film, those beauties and truths that each person has within himself. The memories of these beauties, forgotten in the processes of daily life, are invoked almost subconsciously through the experience of the narrative. These are the memories that elevate us to a state of momentary grace when we experience a true work of art.

If the Hollywood tradition of filmmaking has any inherent value as a medium, it lies in its ability to evoke this spiritual affirmation through the working out of the traditional myths of human experience in anecdotal form. At its best, the Hollywood ethic entertains without calling attention to itself, but plays out archetypical human situations and encourages audience identification with high moral values. **Lady of the Pavements,** then, is Griffith's realization that his themes of inner vision were not antithetical to the Hollywood ethic. We experience the truth of a situation without having to intellectualize it.

One could lament, as critics have, how Griffith's later years were wasted on such trifles as **Drums of Love, The Battle of the Sexes,** and **Lady of the Pavements,** when he could have been directing his energies into more "serious" projects. Such is the standard condemnation of the Hollywood ethic. But, whatever truth lies in this accusation, the only truth we need concern ourselves with today lies in the films that did result; and these films are eloquent testament equally to the beauties inherent in the Hollywood system of movie making, and to the vision of D.W. Griffith. **(To be continued next issue.)**

John Dorr is a freelance writer and filmmaker presently biding his time in Los Angeles as he looks for financing for two film projects. He is a regular TAKE ONE contributor.

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My Life and Times with The Chelsea Girls

by
former projectionist
Bob Cowan

The Chelsea Girls by Andy Warhol went through many changes before it became frozen in its present form. The version which started it off was the one with which I was associated back in the good old days as projectionist at the Cinematheque in the bowels of the Wurlitzer building on charming 42nd Street.

When Warhol brought it to be screened, the first show was more in the nature of a run-through. Hopeless reels were discarded; the order of showing each reel was experimented with. The whole thing was shown double-screen, with two projectors alternating back and forth. The following show it was altered some more. Some of the Marie Menken material was discarded because of impossible sound. In fact, a lot of the sound was incredibly bad. After much fussing and fuming around, Warhol and crew left the theatre and wished me luck. They left behind a vague sort of plan for me to follow, but that was all. During the entire run of the film I never saw them again.

The final order for showing the various reels was a compromise between what they had suggested, and what I knew would work best technically. A switch box had been rigged up between the two projectors that could cut the sound off on one projector while turning it on on the other — or play both of them at once. As I projected the film over and over, I gradually got to know the dialogue by heart, as well as knowing at what point it became unintelligible. I would fade dialogue in and out on both projectors, depending on which visual of the double image had the most interesting pieces of dialogue. Sometimes both tracks were played together with one track dominating the other. I also did sound dissolves from one projector to the other, producing some rather startling results. The actor on the left hand screen would seem to be speaking to another on the right hand screen and vice-versa.

I never ran it the same way twice if I could help it. Every show became a new challenge to see what new combinations I could produce. Volume levels and tone levels were altered as well. If one reel went ahead too fast (both images had to be kept on the screen at all times) I would slow down one reel to 16 frames per second until the other reel caught up. When it came to the color section, I placed a wide angle lens over one projector, sometimes switching it to the other projector in mid-reel, and threw the alternate projector's "normal" image over it. The effect was like a large Cinemascope image with another image playing inside of it. I also used a zoom lens to shrink and expand the interior image. When the spirit moved me, I added a piece of distorted glass and waved bits of cardboard in front of the projector in rapid motion so part of the color image seemed to vibrate and flicker while the rest stayed still. Both tracks were played together during this section, since the sound was almost unintelligible on both, so it didn't make much difference. Occasional phrases that came through clearly were singled out and amplified. At various times, preceeding and following the color section, I would fade color gels in and out on the black and white sections of the film. A few times I used a multifaceted lens which caused one of the images to multiply itself several times over. By using a mirror I was able to beam part of the image off the walls and ceiling. The image would seem to drift slowly off the screen and onto the walls. The last couple of reels of the film had the best sound, so I played it as it was.

I had a very entertaining few days with **The Chelsea Girls** — probably the busiest few days I ever had as a projectionist. Later, I saw a version at the *Elgin Cinema* which was pedestrian to say the least. The sound was a garbled mess, the image grey-brown and lifeless. There were maybe three or four old men in the audience. It was all very depressing. I was there applying for a job as a projectionist, but the whole set-up was so miserable I walked out on it.

As for what it looks like now, at *Anthology Film Archives*, where it is shown in a regular cycle about once a month, I have no idea. I presume it is shown in double screen with all tracks on. I don't even know if it is the same length as the one that I projected, and I don't have much interest in finding out. The enjoyment that I got was in projecting it, not in seeing it. END

Bob Cowan is a prize-winning Canadian filmmaker ***(Soul Freeze,*** *etc.) now living and working in New York City.*

GODZILLA.

The Monster behind the Myth

Never in the history of film has there been a star as big as Godzilla.

In the eighteen years he's been on the scene, Godzilla has been featured in no less than eleven films — evolving from a simplistic monster-villain, bent on the destruction of Japan, to a simplistic monster-hero who, in his most recent film, actually saves mankind from itself. I'm not absolutely certain that I've seen all of the Godzilla films, but I've probably seen most of them — and I'd like to trace the lovable monster's career through the films I *have* seen.

GODZILLA, KING OF THE MONSTERS (1954)

This was to be the first in a long series of Japanese monster films — not all of which starred our hero. It was originally released, in Japan, as **Gojira,** and proved so successful there that Columbia bought it, re-edited it, added an American character, and distributed it as **Godzilla, King of the Monsters.** It brought international fame to its reptilian lead.

The story, such as it is, concerns the accidental awakening of a peacefully-hibernating prehistoric dinosaur by (what else?) an atomic bomb. As soon as Godzilla busts out of his comfy iceberg, he makes tracks for his natural homeland (unspecified). Unfortunately, Tokyo is in the way. An edited-in American newsman (played by Raymond Burr) manages to stop the monster from completely leveling all of Japan by quick-freezing Godzilla into another iceberg — there to rest for all eternity. Clever, these Americans.

GODZILLA'S COUNTER-ATTACK

Eternity lasts for one year.

Due to the great commercial success of **Gojira,** our hero scrapped his plans to make a western in favor of **Godjira no Gyakushu** (translated by semi-reliable sources as **Godzilla Goes to Rome**). This rarely-seen underground masterpiece appears never to have achieved North American release, despite terrific critical acclaim in Paris, and French monster fans lining up around the block. Early in production the location was switched from Rome to Osaka (thereby scotching a projected Japanese-Italian co-production to have been directed, in part, by Federico Fellini — more semi-reliable sources).

The film, intended for Japanese consumption, not only ignores Godzilla's American demise in the iceberg, but it also ignores the original Japanese ending of **Gojira** — in which Godzilla and a self-sacrificing Japanese scientist are both dissolved in Tokyo Bay. In any case, Godzilla's counter-attack fails in this sequel, and he is demised once again. Rest in peace, monster.

Godzilla's North American renaissance would not be for another ten years. In the interim, Japan was being ravaged by Rodan, Mothra, and divers other beasts who, finding Japanese architecture outmoded, were trying their own renovation program. (Rumor has it that Godzilla spent the time working as apprentice focus-puller and hairstylist for the Seven Samurai.)

Meanwhile, back at the studio, Toho was planning a trilogy in which the green gigantus, through emotional and physical conflict with other monster stars (monstars?), could build a new image. After months of negotiations with RKO, Toho picked up the option on King Kong, who could now be brought out of retirement. Yay!

KING KONG VS. GODZILLA

Returning to the American ending of **Godzilla, King of the Monsters,** we find our hero still freeze-dried in Raymond Burr's iceberg, but drifting south into (gasp) warmer waters. Predictably, the eternal iceberg-prison melts into slush, freeing Godzilla once again. Godzilla is still mainly interested in making his way home (wherever that is), and Tokyo is still in the way. This time, however, Raymond Burr and his Americans have seemingly departed for Vietnam — leaving no possible defense against Godzilla's reign of rape, pillage and plunder (mostly pillage, in point of fact, for obvious reasons).

However, in the meantime a familiar sub-plot is unfolding. An entrepreneur is looking for a big act for his exhibition, and sends an expedition to Farou Island, winter home of the King of Kongs. They capture the big ape and bring him to Tokyo, where (surprise!) he escapes.

Tokyo isn't big enough for *two* monsters, so the big guys fight it out — with humanity cheering for the ape (wearing the white stetson). The match is two-falls-out-of-three, and after a good bit of grunting and groaning the combatants roll down a mountain and into the sea. The audience holds its breath. Suspense mounts. Then, a creature begins to emerge from the still waters. Is it... yes, it is, it's KING KONG! Winner and still champion! The ape walks off into the sunset to the cheers of the appreciative fight fans, and Godzilla is out of the way for good and all.

GODZILLA VS. THE THING

In this, the second of the **Godzilla Vs. Everybody In Sight** trilogy, our hero simply appears one day (with no seeming motivation, except that he's out of work) and attempts to continue his journey home. The ape is retired in Florida, so the Japanese government arranges for a fight with Mothra. (Mothra had appeared a few years earlier, and although humanity fought her at first, it soon realized that, as monsters go, Mothra was a good monster. She was also a female monster, which is something of a first unless you count the Bride of Frankenstein.)

This turns out to be a definite mismatch (no matter what women's liberation says), and Godzilla easily defeats the giant moth — who returns, mortally injured, to her home on

by Briane Shelly Nasimok

Farou Island. Before she kicks it in, however, Mothra hatches two eggs, and her new-born twin larvae set off to avenge their mother's death. Eventually they defeat Godzilla, having leveled Tokyo (once again) in the process.

GODZILLA VS. THE SEA MONSTER

This final episode of the trilogy is a deeply moving film, dealing with timely themes of defeat and existential uncertainty. Godzilla has had it. Beaten, shunned by mankind, booed by kiddies at matinees, the poor guy has somehow managed to encase himself in lava in a state of suspended animation. Alone, without a friend, he has given up monstering.

However, there's this Sea Monster which is causing great unhappiness in the Japanese shipping industry by destroying Japanese ships. He (or she, or maybe it) is apparently controlled by mysterious aliens, who wear uniforms and (oddly enough) look Japanese. Four good guys beard the aliens in their lair (which, coincidentally enough, is on good old Farou Island), releasing Godzilla to help them defeat the aliens and their Sea Monster.

Meanwhile, Mothra catches wind of what's up and mixes right in. (True, Mothra was demised in **Godzilla Vs. the Thing,** but then again maybe she wasn't.) Godzilla and Mothra have it out between them to settle their old score, and then join forces to deal with the johnny-come-lately Sea Monster. While Mothra rescues the slaves (I didn't mention the slaves yet, but they're from Farou Island too), Godzilla takes on the Sea Monster and sends him down for the count. The island is blown up, the aliens are destroyed, and Godzilla walks away alive (for once) with the natives cheering. Godzilla is a hero!

The trilogy ends on a note of doubt: has Godzilla become a force for good, or is he merely faking while he hatches new schemes for the destruction of Tokyo? The next sequence of films answers this question.

GHIDRA, THE THREE-HEADED MONSTER

At this stage of the game, a non-terrestrial monster (as opposed to the home-grown variety featured so far) attempts to muscle in on the territory. Ghidra knows what's happening, apparently, for his first official act is to destroy Tokyo. Poor Tokyo. Human weapons have little or no effect on the beast, but luckily Godzilla (with the help of Rodan and the Mothra Larvae) takes it on himself to rid the planet of the invader. After all, if every Tom, Dick and Harry start destroying Tokyo there won't be much left for the guys whose idea it was in the first place. The former villains, now transmuted into heroes, vanquish Ghidra — who flees into outer space, leaving the world a safer place for you, me and Tokyo.

TV Notes: Since this article was first written, two more Godzilla films have made their way to the television screen — apparently bypassing North American theatres. Godzilla Jr. (it turns out) makes his first appearance in **Son of Godzilla** (made before **Destroy All Monsters**). In this tender tale of filial devotion, Minya (aka Godzilla Jr.) proves he has come of age by destroying another monster (the monster equivalent of a bar mitvah — destroying Tokyo will also suffice).

The second tv film, **Godzilla's Revenge,** apparently was made after **Destroy All Monsters** and features pretty much the same cast. It is distinguished from Godzilla's other films in being primarily for children — our hero existing (in this film) only in the imagination of children. The story concerns a young boy who daydreams about "Monster Island", visiting it and becoming Minya's best friend. **Godzilla's Revenge** features battles (taken from three previous films) between Godzilla and Kamacharoos (a giant praying mantis), Manda (a huge snake), Anulis (an immense armadillo), and Govy (a large hawk). Despite the film's title, it does not show Godzilla taking revenge on anyone or anything.

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DESTROY ALL MONSTERS

This film introduces ten, count'em, ten monsters (no waiting, folks) new to North American audiences. Of special interest is a cameo appearance of Godzilla Jr. Jr.'s existence has never been acknowledged before and, in fact, after this film he is never seen again. Where he comes from, and, more to the point, whether Godzilla is his father or his mother, is never made clear. Obviously, things being how they are, Godzilla has a mate stashed away somewhere, but the subject is never gone into.

Since **Ghidra,** all the terrestrial monsters have established an exclusive resort on Mt. Fuji, where they spend their time in innocent play. However, the aliens from **Sea Monster** have resurrected themselves, and planted radio gadgets in the monsters' brains — causing them to turn on mankind and wreak international havoc. The helpless beasts start out by destroying Tokyo, of course, and go on to level the rest of Japan as well as London, New York, Moscow and Kirkland Lake. In the end, good triumphs: earthlings neutralize the radio gadgets, and the monsters turn on the aliens and destroy them.

MONSTER ZERO

Well, the aliens are still around, folks. This time they pretend to be good guys and suck in the earthlings by asking for help in ridding themselves of Monster Zero (who is really just Ghidra in minor disguise). Earth agrees to send Godzilla and Rodan to the aid of the aliens.

The result is a rematch between Godzilla and Rodan, on one side, and Ghidra on the other — this time staged on the moon. However, it's all a sinister plot to lure the good monsters away. In the middle of the fight Ghidra splits, leaving Godzilla and Rodan stranded on the moon while he (she?) wreaks havoc back on Earth. After a while Godzilla and Rodan manage to thumb a ride back home, where they defeat Ghidra and the aliens for good and all.

GODZILLA VS. THE SMOG MONSTER (1972)

The ultimate defeat of the alien forces meant that it was time for Toho to come up with a new task for Godzilla. Taking off from the great interest in environmental pollution in Japan, a new, "now" menace was invented — smog! Thus, in Godzilla's latest adventure he is called upon to save humanity not from monsters but, essentially, from itself. Which may be the greatest monster of all.

Somehow, a giant glop of sludge gets itself together and achieves consciousness. It becomes a monstrous, red-eyed blob which soars around an unspecified industrial landscape, destroying factories, lowering property values, and spewing poisonous mud, sulphuric acid smog, and lethal crimson rays from various orifices.

As the smog monster parties around, one of the local children (who happens to be the son of a famous scientist) dreams about Godzilla coming to the rescue. Obviously, the evil dinosaur has come a long way from his ancient beginnings —he has become a contemporary anti-hero for the young. In any case, Godzilla responds to the prayers of the masses and takes on the smog monster (which is named Hedorah). Finally, with the help of the boy's scientist father (who builds an anti-smog device consisting of two giant electrodes, between which Hedorah must be lured) Godzilla wipes out the smog monster, saves the world, and lumbers off into the sunset without destroying Tokyo.

With **Smog Monster,** Godzilla has seemingly adapted himself to the demands of the time. The film features psychedelic kaleidoscope effects, multiple split-screen images, and an acid-rock musical score. The old monster has come a long way.

Long live Godzilla!

END

Briane Shelly Nasimok is presently attending the University of Toronto. His film, **Tricia,** *played recently at Toronto's Uptown Theater. He is unmarried, childless, and plans on retiring as soon as possible.*

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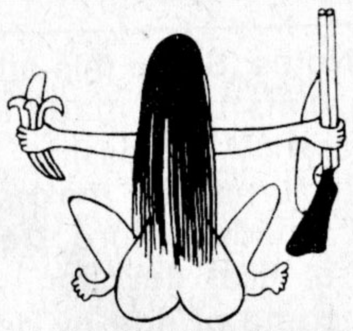

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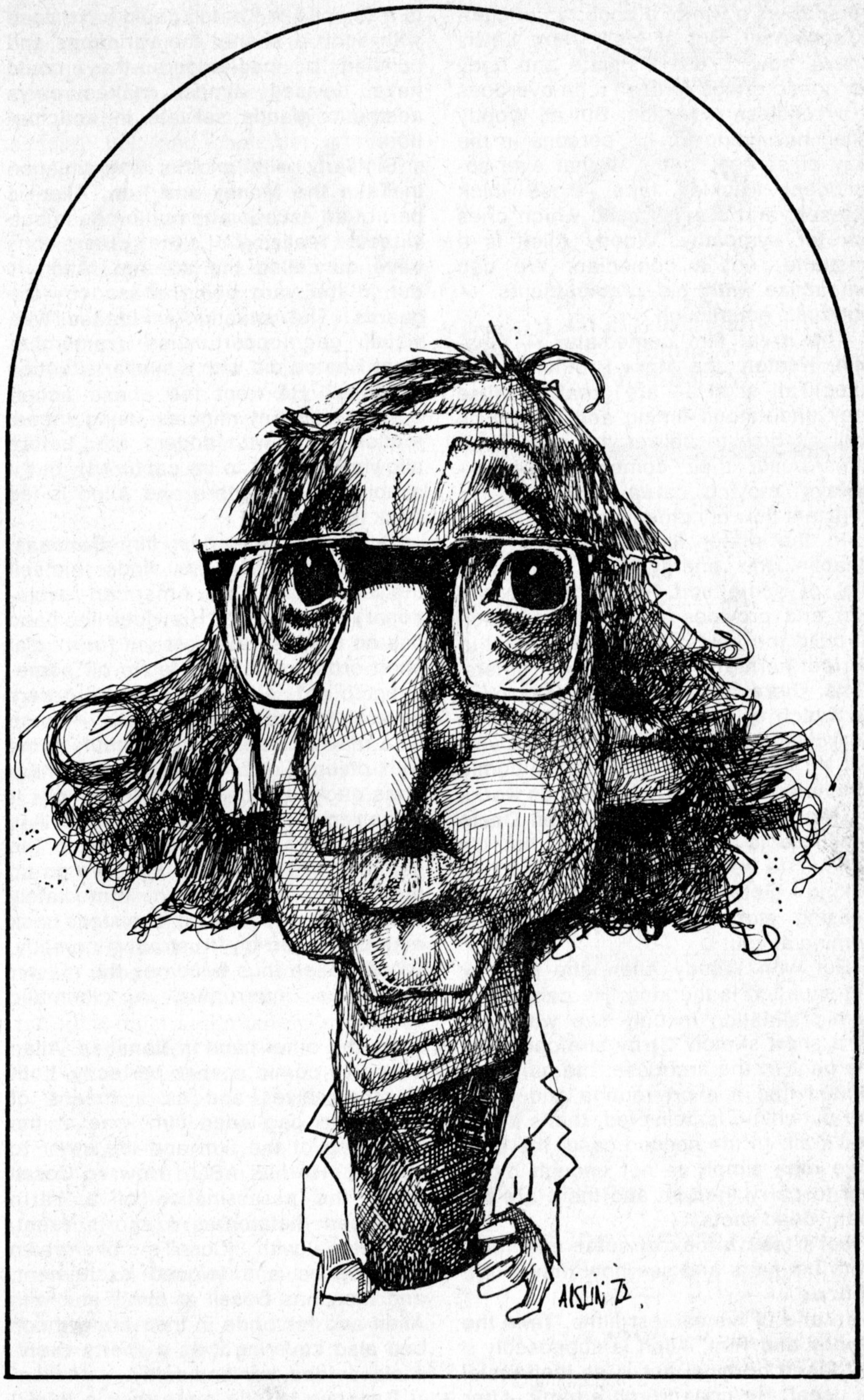

ILLUSTRATION: AISLIN

The Wooden Acting of Woody Allen

by BERNARD WEINER

Woody Allen has become America's latest red-hot export item. He spews out film after film, play after play, story after story — and is the new darling of the American, and foreign, movie-going public. He even had his picture on the cover of *Time* magazine, indicating that he has truly arrived in the Big Leagues.

In thinking about the phenomenon of Woody Allen's success as a movie-maker, I am led inexorably to James Agee's classic 1949 essay, "Comedy's Greatest Era." Nobody has understood screen comedy better, and probably nobody will. Agee begins:

"In the language of screen comedians, four of the main grades of laugh are the titter, the yowl, the bellylaugh and the boffo. The titter is just a titter. The yowl is a runaway titter. Anyone who has ever had the pleasure knows all about a bellylaugh. The boffo is the laugh that kills. An ideally good gag, perfectly constructed and played, would bring the victim up this ladder of laughs by cruelly controlled degrees to the top rung, and would then proceed to wobble, shake, wave and brandish the ladder until he groaned for mercy. Then, after the shortest possible time out for recuperation, he would feel the first wicked tickling of the comedian's whip once more and start up a new ladder.

"The reader can get a fair enough idea of the current state of screen comedy by asking himself how long it has been since he has had that treatment. The best of comedies these days hand out plenty of titters and once in a while it is possible to achieve a yowl without overstating. Even those who have never seen anything better must occasionally have the feeling, as they watch the current run or, rather, trickle of screen comedy, that they are having to make a little cause for laughter go an awfully long way. And anyone who has watched screen comedy over the past ten or fifteen years is bound to realize that it has quietly but steadily deteriorated."

Agee then discusses one of the reasons for this deterioration, which is as true if not truer in 1972 than it was when he wrote the essay, and which has particular relevance to the would-be comic art of Woody Allen:

"To put it unkindly, the only thing wrong with screen comedy today is that it takes place on a screen which talks. Because it talks, the only comedians who ever mastered the screen cannot work, for they cannot combine their comic style with talk. Because there is a screen, talking comedians are trapped into a continual exhibition as screen comedians on a surface as big as the side of a barn."

Woody Allen is a very funny writer — a kind of pseudo-hip mix between Neil Simon, Wally Cox and James Thurber (if you can imagine such a cross-breed) — with an emphasis on self-deprecatory one-liners. His mind is inventive and his feel for the comic spirit seems intuitive. As a gag-writer for film and television (he used to write jokes for Sid Caesar, Herb Shriner, Gary Moore), and for *New Yorker* magazine, where I've often read his stuff, he's first-rate, with an amazing gift for reproducing a wacky, upside-down image of an absurd world out to get him.

But he's simply not a good screen-writer, nor is he a good film-director — nor, more importantly since he stars in his films, is he much of a screen comedian. In that medium, he comes across as little more than a standup-comic-playing-actor, with a mono-faceted talent for screen humor. In that sense, he is much like Jerry Lewis — from whom he copies quite a bit. Allen, like Lewis, creates a screen

persona as a wimp, a boob, an ungainly schlemiel. But at least Jerry Lewis knows how to use his face and body for comic effect — even if he overdoes it by endless repetition. But all Woody Allen has going for his persona in the way of screen "body" is that ever-so-innocent freckled face, those thick glasses, and a small build which cries out for sympathy. Woody Allen is a costume, not a comedian. We can empathize with his predicaments — but that's not enough.

The great film comedians — Chaplin, Keaton, the Marx Brothers, Jacques Tati et al — are great because they understand timing and motion as well as how to deliver the gag. Their films build, their comedy moves — always moving, always building, a constant flow of comedic energy.

In the major films of Keaton and Chaplin, this energy flows through a plot of some sort, which unifies the film and provides a base upon which to build the jokes: form and content in perfect harmony. In the Marx Brothers' films, there are rudimentary plot-pegs on which to hang the jokes, but their anarchistic lunacy and Groucho's verbal wit never cease building the comic machinery. In Tati's most famous works — **Mr. Hulot's Holiday** and **Mon Oncle** — there is lots of dialogue, but it's difficult to remember it even being a talking picture since Tati's never-ceasing store of visual gags keeps coming at you.

But with Woody Allen, the joke or the situation is the king. He can milk a comic situation in only two ways: 1) by a short sketch; 2) by stretching out the gag. In the first case, the humor is locked into a short routine and when the punchline is delivered, that's it and that's all. In the second case, the one-joke idea simply is not enough by itself to carry the film and there are too many dead spots.

Let's take a look at some examples from his films and see how they work, or fizzle.

In one of his earliest films, **Take the Money and Run,** Allen is supposedly a hardened criminal but is as ineffectual as usual. He goes to rob a bank. After waiting in line, he hands the teller a note saying he has a gun and demanding the money. The teller can't read his handwriting and wants to know what a "gub" is; Allen and the teller have a conversation about his penmanship and the difference between a "gub" and a "gun". Up to that point the joke is hilariously executed. Allen attempts to build it by drawing the bank's assistant managers and manager into the penmanship problem, but since he has nothing but that single idea to build on, with no further comic action by his character, the scene simply goes on and on until it goes nowhere and he finally ends it. Imagine what the genius of a Chaplin or Keaton could have done with such a scene; the variations and building of gag-ladders they could have devised almost makes one's aesthetic glands salivate in anticipation.

Similarly with another gag-situation in **Take the Money and Run,** Allen is part of an escape attempt in prison but, without realizing it, the other cons have cancelled the attempt. Allen is out in the yard being chased by the guards. The situation is loaded with visual gag opportunities (remember what Keaton did with a similar situation in **Cops**? He kept the chase accelerating for many minutes, using speed, motion, jokes with ladders, etc., before allowing himself to be captured), but it simply goes nowhere and Allen is led back to his cell.

Or, say, in his next film **Bananas,** where, willy-nilly, he finds himself the leader of a Latin American revolutionary movement. His guerrilla band has no food, so they set out for a local short-order restaurant to rip off something to eat. Allen goes in and orders several thousand sandwiches —some with mayonnaise, some without, some with onions, etc. — which is an hilarious gag-situation. But then he kills it by having a stock scene of his guerrillas simply carrying the food back to the camp in wheelbarrows. First we go up the comic ladder, then immediately down. One step forward, two steps back makes for terribly frustrating comedy. Woody Allen thus becomes the master of coitus interruptus in cinematic humor.

On the other hand in **Bananas,** Allen uses two comic scenes perfectly, both for themselves and as a means of unifying a gag-laden film, one at the beginning of the film and the other to close it. He has ABC's Howard Cosell cover the assassination of a Latin American dictator as a sports event, complete with Cosell's overdrawn monologues and feigned excitement, and then has Cosell at film's end with Allen and his bride in their honeymoon bed also covering it as a sports event. A clever idea, handled deftly.

Bananas is little more than a thinly-plotted series of gags and sketches. There's nothing inherently wrong with this approach — Tati's later films have veered in this direction, as have the works of Pierre Etaix and Robert Derry — but once again Allen is out of his league as a screen comedian, and as a film director. Once he's done his shy, bumbling bit he's at a loss for anything deeper, wackier, more insanely funny. Likewise, with **Take the Money and Run.**

For one of his more recent films, **Play It Again, Sam,** he let someone else do the directing, Herbert Ross, and as a result the film hangs together more tightly. But it still faces many of the same problems, since Allen is the chief writer and the star. In addition, the film is an adaptation from Allen's Broadway hit, which tends to make it even less cinematic.

It's essentially a one-joke film: Allen's fixation on Humphrey Bogart as his idol and confessor. His character is a film-critic living in San Francisco, whose wife (quite sensibly) leaves him and his fantasy existence for the kicks of the real world. He then is befriended by a married couple who try to fix him up with dates, which he always manages to bungle (mostly with trite gag-situations: smoking two cigarettes at a time, knocking lamps over in nervousness, etc.). Slowly, he realizes that he loves his best friend's wife and she — neglected by her capitalist piggie husband — begins to feel the same toward Allen. They have a one-night affair, but then — in a fairly clever parody of the last scene from **Casablanca** — Allen does indeed become Bogart as he gives up the woman he loves for the higher moral value of friendship.

In his latest release, **Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Sex But Were Afraid to Ask,** Allen departs from the attempt to structure a plot, however jerry-built it may be, and uses the episodic approach. Taking off from the famous title of Dr. David Reuben's sex-book, Allen concocts seven episodes based on seven of Dr. Reuben's chapter-headings.

At least two of the episodes are take-offs on famous films — one on Antonioni's **L'Avventura,** which bombs out for many reasons, not the least of which is that surely by this time, such parodies are fairly old hat. The other take-off is on **Fantastic Voyage.** In this episode, one of the most clever, Allen takes us inside the human body to show us what happens during an ejaculation (Woody plays a reluctant sperm who emerges to a hymn, "The Coming of the Lord").

He also does a parody on the TV quiz show *What's My Line* called *What's My Perversion,* which doesn't really go anywhere. Several of the other episodes fizzle as well: one of a transvestite wearing his wife's clothes, and another a shaggy-lamb story of a doctor's love-affair with a sheep.

One episode which does work is a take-off on an old horror flick. This one has a giant tit escaping from a demented sexologist's laboratory, wreaking mammory havoc on the inhabitants of the countryside, crushing them and drowning them in milk, until it is finally captured by the world's largest bra-cup.

With the exception of the giant tit-monster and the ejaculation bits, what makes the episodes that work funny is not anything visual or cinematic that is happening, but rather derives from Allen's wacky sense of humor in

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devising screwball situations and one-line gags. (An hilarious one-liner is housed in an otherwise lackluster first episode. Allen, a medieval court jester, has caught his hand in the queen's chastity belt and can't get it out. "I have to think of something quick," he says. "The Renaissance will be here soon and we'll all be painting.")

Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Sex is better than that other recent loser of a sex-spoof movie, **Is There Sex After Death?,** but not all that much better. Too many of the episodes drag terribly, or are based on a single joke. As a unified comic effort, forget it. Once again, it's a series of skits and gags, rather than great comedy that builds — a film that is almost more funny thinking about than watching.

Perhaps Agee put his finger on Allen's problem when, in the same 1949 essay, he talked about one of the early movies starring Bob Hope, another stand-up, one-liner comic who tried to make it in the cinema: "Most of the laughs in **The Paleface** are verbal. Bob Hope is very adroit with his lines and now and then, when the words don't get in the way, he makes a good beginning as a visual comedian. But only the beginning, never the middle or the end. He is funny... but he doesn't know how to get still funnier (i.e., how to build and milk) or how to be funniest (i.e., how to top or cap his gag)."

Like Hope, and Peter Sellers at one stage, Woody Allen is trapped in the success syndrome which says that a hot item must strike before the "heat" diminishes, before the public fascination wears off. Hence, the creative outpouring from Allen in almost every medium — virtually all of it seemingly unfinished, not terribly well-thought-out, lacking in the polish and craft of the true comic genius.

You go to a Woody Allen movie, have a few titters and a couple of yowls — even a little innocuous social and political satire is thrown in occasionally for Relevance — and then leave the theatre feeling good but not quite, well, satisfied. Fifteen minutes later you're hungry again, and the only thing that will satisfy that comic craving, really, is a good Chaplin or Keaton or Marx Brothers or Tati movie. When you walk out of these classic comedies, your sides ache from bellylaughs and boffos and your insides are jolly. Perhaps that's why American distributors are bringing out those oldies-but-goodies, and why so many people — young and old, American, Canadian, European — are packing the theaters to see them. Woody Allen simply isn't in the great comedy league, though he's entertaining enough for the minors. END

Bernard Weiner, film critic for The Overseas Weekly, *contributes regularly to* TAKE ONE, Film Quarterly, Sight & Sound *and* The Nation.

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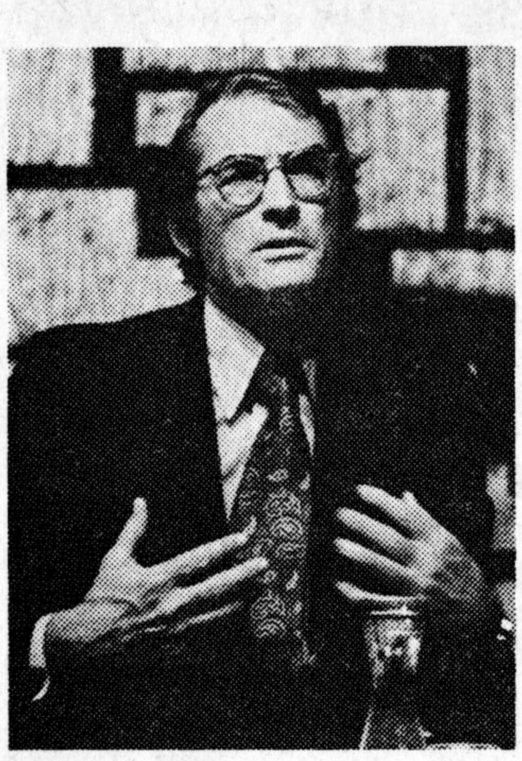
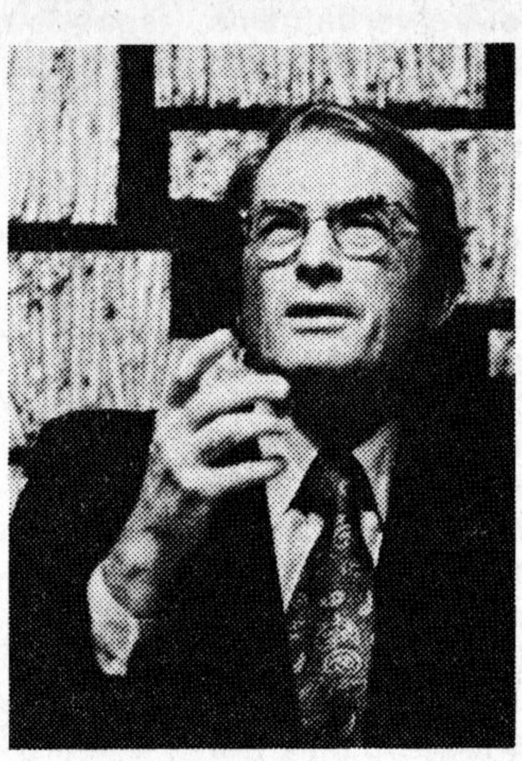
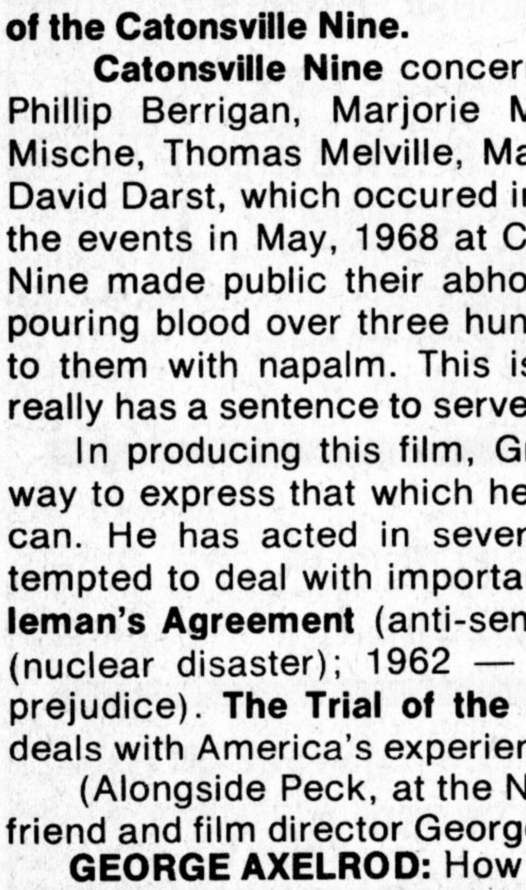
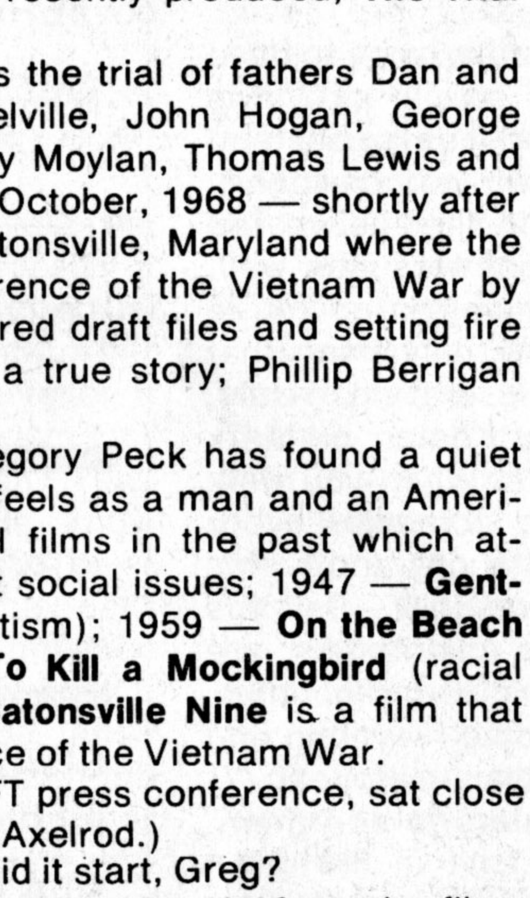
Gregory Peck
on
The Trial of the Catonsville Nine
interviewed by
Gordon Woodside

DORON ABRAHAMI

Gregory Peck was at the National Film Theatre in London to talk about the film that he recently produced, **The Trial of the Catonsville Nine.**

Catonsville Nine concerns the trial of fathers Dan and Phillip Berrigan, Marjorie Melville, John Hogan, George Mische, Thomas Melville, Mary Moylan, Thomas Lewis and David Darst, which occured in October, 1968 — shortly after the events in May, 1968 at Catonsville, Maryland where the Nine made public their abhorrence of the Vietnam War by pouring blood over three hundred draft files and setting fire to them with napalm. This is a true story; Phillip Berrigan really has a sentence to serve.

In producing this film, Gregory Peck has found a quiet way to express that which he feels as a man and an American. He has acted in several films in the past which attempted to deal with important social issues; 1947 — **Gentleman's Agreement** (anti-semitism); 1959 — **On the Beach** (nuclear disaster); 1962 — **To Kill a Mockingbird** (racial prejudice). **The Trial of the Catonsville Nine** is a film that deals with America's experience of the Vietnam War.

(Alongside Peck, at the NFT press conference, sat close friend and film director George Axelrod.)

GEORGE AXELROD: How did it start, Greg?

GREGORY PECK: Well, it was a play. In fact, the filmscript was taken verbatim from the playscript. It was originally done by Dan Berrigan, tried out in the Los Angeles Theatre, and then it was re-edited and re-arranged by Dan Berrigan and professional playwright, American Saul Levitt. It opened in New York in 1971 with great success, and following that it returned to the place of its origin, Los Angeles, where it played with great success for seven weeks. It was there I saw it. I had been searching for a way to say what I thought about our country's involvement in Vietnam, and I suppose I felt I was a bit overage for carrying placards, marching in the streets, and lying down in front of the Justice Department in Washington. I felt that this would give me an opportunity to express what I felt, deeply, about the continued senseless slaughter that's going on there in our names. So I seized upon the cast, and young director Gordon Davidson, and we managed to acquire the film rights. We put it together as a totally independent production — we are not allied with any major studio. It has been distributed in the United States. It opened in France a week ago, and perhaps it will be distributed in the United Kingdom. I suppose, to sum it up, it was our way of going to Catonsville.

I suspect that only people who agree with those nine people who were arrested for burning draft cards with napalm in 1968 will go to see the film. What steps are you taking to reach the non-partisans?

GREGORY PECK: Well, we're doing everything we can to bring it to their attention. I've travelled the United States, and in each city in which it has been shown I've done my best to appear on TV shows, and radio and newspaper interviews, to let people know that we're bringing this offering to their city. We've had an excellent press, largely — some exceptions, but a largely favourable press. Other than that, I don't know what we can do. We hope there will be good word of mouth, that people who find something provocative in the film will talk to their friends about it, and if enough people come out to see it, then we will do what we set out to do... that is, to bring the Berrigans' views to a wider audience than it reached on stage.

Do you think using a major star might have helped the success of this film?

GREGORY PECK: Well, quite early it was suggested that I play the part of Father Phillip, and I considered that seriously for five minutes. I thought it would detract from the credibility. I think myself, that it has a splendid group of new actors, and the fact that they are not easily recognized, and their mannerisms are not familiar to the film-going audience, will lend an added reality and credibility to the proceedings.

Mr. Peck, can you tell us what will happen to the proceeds of the film?

GREGORY PECK: Well, I doubt whether there are going to be any proceeds... to be quite frank about it. If any profits result from the film, they're split I think, in thirty-two directions. To the author, the cinematographer, the director, the producer, each of the actors, the editor and costume designer. All of whom worked for either union scale, or for nothing, and took instead a share of any possible profits that might occur. If there are any, and I hope there are, the cast have one per cent each of the profits of the picture. I hope they see something from it.

How much of the script is factual, and how much of it is dramatized or in the light of Father Berrigan's afterthoughts — sort of a further meditation on the event?

GREGORY PECK: I went over the transcript of the trial and I would say that 99 per cent of the words that were spoken in the film were taken directly from the transcript. It's a strange trial, you see. The Justice Department appointed a "permissive" judge and a "compassionate" prosecutor, in contrast to Judge Hoffmann who tried the Chicago Seven (a most repressive man, if you remember). Now apparently as a reaction to the Chicago Seven trial, the Justice Department decided to let these people have their full say in court, so in that sense it was not an ordinary trial. Really, they were given the chance to bear public witness — to tell how they abominated the Vietnam War, and why they came to Catonsville.

Mr. Peck, I admire how clearly and honestly you talk about it, but what worries me is I'm watching this thing, and

I see clips from actual newsreels, and then I see (and I must take your word for it) what you call "fine actors." I think they are fine stage actors, and probably work extremely well in the Mark Taper Theatre, but when I see them on film coming after those newsreel clippings... they look theatrical to me, unreal... I can't believe them. Or, I can believe that that kind of acting has been done one hundred and twenty times before on television. I'm trying to make this a brotherly criticism, because I don't think it's the right film... I think it's a whole-hearted, sincere film...

GEORGE AXELROD: Is this a question sir?

No... it's a... well, are we having a platform/audience thing, because I mean who's organizing this... George, seriously, you're talking about a situation in Vietnam, and you can't impose a platform/audience relationship on this because that's what caused the war in Vietnam. The answer to your question is no, this is a brotherly criticism.

Another voice: *Surely the point is that sincerity isn't enough, because the Berrigan brothers were sincere four years ago and America's gone further down the same road. They haven't stopped anything. What is the answer? The answer obviously is not to make films about it.*

Another voice: *Whether it is the answer or not, was it a success in terms of people reacting to the sentiments of the film?*

GREGORY PECK: Well, most of those who have seen it have reacted to the sentiments of the film, and when I say "largely critical success," I don't mean without exceptions. To be completely frank about it, there are people who loathe this film and there are people who are moved to tears by it — but it does stir strong feelings in American audiences.

How do they loathe this film?

GREGORY PECK: When we previewed the film we took it to two university communities, where it was liked by approximately 85 per cent of those who took the trouble to fill out the cards. But we wanted to try it where we thought audiences might not like it, so we chose a kind of instant suburb of Los Angeles, a blue collar community with a certain amount of light industry going on, a community characterized by bowling alleys, supermarkets, pizza parlours. It was a politically conservative area close to — I don't know whether the name Orange County is significant to you, but it is known as a most ultra-conservative area of L.A. Of six hundred people in the audience, two hundred walked out and it was not a thing I'd like to live through again. But by the time the film was half over, all those who were going to leave had left. And again, of the four hundred who remained 80-90 per cent of them liked the film, and said they were terribly moved by it — that it had brought about some soul searching, some re-examination of their own personal values. They found out something about our policy in Central and South America they hadn't been fully aware of. Some of them were Catholics, and had this sort of thing to say, "God bless the Berrigans — they're *living* their religion and not merely reciting it." We seemed to reach them on many levels.

To bring back a point that man in the front was on about before being cut off, I thought that although perhaps the quality of the acting did not measure up to the newsreel scenes, that it would have been more effective if the Berrigans played the parts themselves. I don't know about the others, but I do know that the Berrigans were not available at that time because they were in jail.

GREGORY PECK: Thank you, Mrs. Axelrod. No, I'm quite willing to carry on that discussion, and I don't think that George or I meant to cut it short. I find these actors entirely believable. I think it's a matter of individual judgement.

May I take you up on this? I'm a theatre director, and we attempted to do a show in London about Vietnam and we had to explore for ourselves how an English actor, who has not been through that experience — either being American or a Vietnamese — can get inside the skin of what that experience really is. I mean it is such an outrage. I agree with you when you call it an abomination, but these are just words in our mouths. If we are to use any means of art to deal with it, they have to be at that level — they have to be as great as the thing is evil. If there is any function at all in making a film or a play or a book or a song or anything else, if you're doing the usual thing of making another film, another play, then it has to be the best, and it's on that level I'm making this criticism.

That's one reason why this film is very important, because in the trial of the Chicago Seven — it was so ridiculous that everybody got to know about it, heard about it. But in this case the Justice Department cleverly gave in to tokenism, and gave them a free hand, and it all went very smoothly and not that many people heard about it. I mean even politically aware people. This film points out the things that were said and done, so it is a very good effort.

Before you independently produced it, did you at any time attempt to set it up as a Stanley Kramer type production, or to take it to a major studio for backing?

GREGORY PECK: Oh, I'm acquainted with the people who run the major studios. I talked it over with one or two studio agents who simply said flatly, "Good luck to you." They weren't at all interested. No, it couldn't have been made any other way. Incidentally, the film was made on a small budget — $250,000 — and it was made in eight days. I don't think we could have made it without the lighting cameraman, Haskell Wexler. An amusing story about his involvement is that when I called him to ask him if he would photograph this film I said, "Haskell, we're going to make this film of the trial of..." and he said, "I'll do it." So I said, "Well, what about money?" and he said, "Oh hell, we're not going to make any money anyway. I'll do it for nothing."

It has been four years since the Berrigans and the other seven people came to trial. Why has it taken so long to produce the film?

GREGORY PECK: Well, the events took place in 1968, but Father Berrigan's book was not concluded until late 1970. The play was done in 1971, and we made the film just as quickly as we could. But, in fact, this act of the Berrigans did have an enormous effect on the reversal of our war policy — which began in 1968 when President Johnson ended the bombing. The bombing has resumed since, unhappily. But I think the effect on public opinion has been significant. Add to the views of the Berrigans the views of many students, many young people, many people everywhere, many Americans who have disagreed with our Vietnam policy from the beginning. I think that our "withdrawal" can be at least partially credited to the Berrigans and others like them.

I will say that I often think of a play called *Waiting for Lefty* in relation to this. It grew out of the depression of the 1930s... a direct response, or cry of protest, in an immediate situation. We are unfortunately not out of Vietnam yet. Not so many Americans are being killed, but a great many Vietnamese still are being killed. Soldiers, women and children are being killed every day, and IF a kind of stunned apathy has set in, IF the attitude of many Americans is a hope that the war will go away, IF we can reach a few minds and a few hearts and re-awaken the conscience of America, then perhaps this film will be useful in that respect.

If not, then one can view it as a retrospective of what may, ten or twenty years from now, be viewed as an historic event, a significant event, bringing about an enormous change in the American attitude. In any time, now or in the future, I think it is a plea for simple decency, for humanity, and an eloquent argument for the sanctity of individual human life.

GEORGE AXELROD: Could I ask a question at this point? Really, this being largely a non-American audience, could we consider for a moment a guy who's a so-called member of the "Establishment" like yourself? At what point did the change occur? I think that America *has* changed, and when a person like Gregory Peck changes I think that is interesting. How is America changing? Is that a fair question, Greg?

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GREGORY PECK: Yes, sure. Most of us went along without questioning the administration very seriously. We may have gone along with it very uneasily. We may have believed what we were told, that it would soon be over. We may have been convinced that our "friends" in South East Asia had asked us to come to their aid, and we were bound to come to their aid by the terms of the SEATO pact. Mostly, I think America thought it would soon be over, an unpleasant job had to be done.

As it went on and on, it became obvious that we were destroying a country in order to save it, and that we were engaged in a mass murder. We found that we couldn't justify it in any kind of human or political terms. I think that began to happen to most of us about '67-'68, and it's at the point now (I don't know what the most recent poll is) but I think that 70 per cent or more of Americans want to end it on *any* terms and get it over with as soon as possible.

I must tell you about the time we showed the film in Paris. We invited some friends and among them were Simone Signoret and Costa Gavras. Simone was quite moved. She rushed at me, threw her arms around me and said "You're some kind of cowboy, you are." And Costa Gavras wrung my hand and kept saying, "It's an act of courage to make this film." And I like compliments as well as the next fellow, but I said, "In fact, it is *not.* Because it doesn't hold a candle to the editorials on the pages of the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* every day." These things are being said. These ideas are widely disseminated.

So I feel very moved and stirred by this kind of quiet, ordinary demonstration of personal courage. These aren't Hemingway heroes. These are nuns and brothers, teachers and priests who are willing to put their lives on the line. After all, to put it in the simplest human terms — they didn't know how the police would behave when they arrived. They might have been clubbed; they might have been hurt; they might have been killed. They didn't know. They couldn't predict the behaviour of the police, and once arrested it was almost a certainty that they would give up their freedom. They didn't know how long their sentences might be.

I think Americans have a deep emotional involvement, and I can't expect people living outside our country to feel so deeply, but it's very vivid in my mind. Hundreds of thousands of families, millions of people were waiting— when their sons, or their sweethearts, or friends or relatives were in Vietnam— were waiting for that phone call, that knock at the door, or that cable from the Defense Department that meant you had lost someone in Vietnam. That is very fresh in our minds. I had a son there, so I know what it is like.

What do you hope to accomplish?

GREGORY PECK: Well, one is in the business of communicating; of sharing convictions and ideas, sometimes on themes of enormous social importance. One wants to share these convictions and ideas, but one doesn't necessarily expect an immediate action. It would be vanity, or presumption, to expect to accomplish a *great* deal. But one *hopes* that others will share these views and that public opinion will be affected to some degree. Then, perhaps, eventually to bring about social change.

To go on a moment about Costa Gavras when he said, "It was an act of courage," and I said, "No, because this is being said in the media every day in the United States." He said, "No. You don't understand what I mean. I couldn't have made this film in France. I wouldn't have been permitted. The strongest virtue that the Americans have is that you manage to cling to the freedom of expression and the standing up on your hind legs and telling the President and the Congress, and the State Department, and the military and industrial complex, and the United Fruit Company that they are all *wrong.* For God's sake, don't give up that privilege!" END

Gordon Woodside is a writer-filmmaker working in London. A previous contributor to TAKE ONE, *he has just finished directing his second short film, shot in 35mm, entitled* ***First Encounter.***

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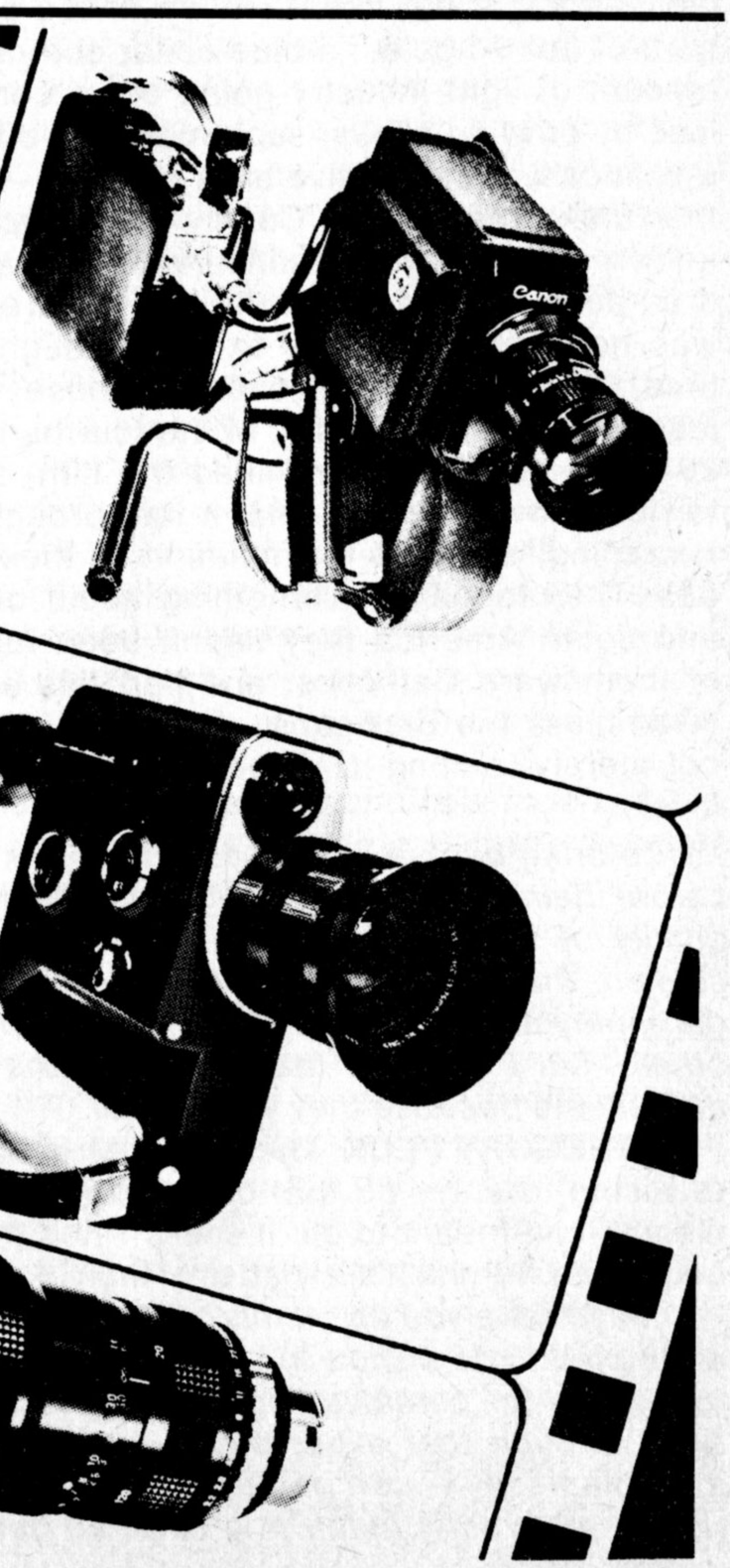

DUCK, YOU SUCKER!/ ONE

Directed and Produced by Sergio Leone. Screenplay by Luciano Vicenzoni, Sergio Donati, Sergio Leone. Story by Sergio Leone. Director of Photography, Giuseppe Ruzzolini. Music, Ennio Morricone. Art Director, Andrea Cristanti. Cast: Rod Steiger, James Coburn, Romolo Valli, Maria Monti, Rik Battaglia, Franco Graziosi, Antoine Domingo, Goffredo Pistoni, Roy Bosier. A United Artists release of Rafram Films. Eastman color; 1972. 139 minutes.

"Hey God, are you sure this is Mesa Verde?" mumbles a confused Rod Steiger shortly after entering the Mexican town where, immediately, a man falls dead in his arms. Meanwhile, a firing squad lines people up against a wall on a pleasant afternoon while no one pays attention.

Leone presents Mesa Verde and the Mexico of Pancho Villa's revolution as sterile nightmare worlds, womanless dreams of destruction into which Steiger, as the ignorant Mexican bandit Juan, is painfully initiated. **Duck, You Sucker!** is Leone's most serious and complex film. Below the comic nightmare surface of his other films has always been a nagging conscience, as tormented as that of Fellini — whose work is remarkably similar. Clint Eastwood in **A Fistful of Dollars, For A Few Dollars More** and **The Good, The Bad and The Ugly** and Charles Bronson in **Once Upon a Time in the West** moved through a rocky Inferno of semi-human monsters, cleansing by destroying while they remained untouched and unchanged. In **Duck, You Sucker!** the Inferno is still there, but this time James Coburn (as a former IRA revolutionary) and Steiger are destroyed by it.

Steiger is violent, ignorant, working with his all-male family. He robs an elaborate stagecoach, rapes a woman who insulted him, and sends the cruel, aristocratic passengers, including a glutinous bishop and a bigoted American, naked into the desert on a horse-cart. Steiger is a small chief in Leone's familiar comic-violent world of gigantic close-ups and wild camera angles. Steiger is at home — an engaging "ugly" very much like Eli Wallach in **The Good, The Bad and the Ugly.** Almost immediately, Steiger notes a series of mysterious explosions in the mountains and discovers their source: Coburn, a masked figure on a motorcycle.

To Steiger, explosives-expert Coburn represents the realization of a dream: the robbing of the bank at Mesa Verde — a dream confused comically in Steiger's mind with religious exaltation. He sets up a shrine to the bank and tries to persuade Coburn, whom he considers "a great magician," to help him.

Coburn, an intellectual anarchist who reads Bakunin, exploits the bandit's tendency to identify with him, ("Juan and John," says the bandit) and to see him as a mystical, Christ-like figure. Coburn leads the violent innocent, and his family, into a revolution that Steiger despises as created by people with books and resulting in the death of the poor.

In the first half of the film, the tone is comic, the violence personal, close and intimate... a bullet at close range, a knife in the back. As Steiger moves into Mesa Verde the violence becomes less personal, bigger, nightmarish. The personal violence of Steiger and his clan is understandable, a matter of survival and a simple concept of honor. As Steiger and his family, led on by Coburn (who is himself driven by memories of betrayal by an IRA friend years before) get involved in the world of cities, armies and revolution, they lose control and vast horror takes over.

Eventually, a totally-disillusioned Coburn realizes that his corruption of the small Mexican bandit has been wrong, but it is too late. Steiger has lost everything he believed in and loved, and is left an unintentional hero of the revolution he despises.

Leone's handling of dialogue and action is so entertaining that one has a tendency to overlook the point of it all. For example, Coburn continually creates a series of explosions with "holy water". The first explosions are distant, involving no humans. Then, when one of Steiger's bandits attempts to use Coburn's dynamite, he is destroyed and debris goes flying in the air — including an uprooted tree which drops slowly to the ground with the circular brim of the dead bandit's hat. The scene is comic and beautiful, although a death has occurred. As the film moves forward, each explosion is bigger and less comic, resulting in ever more death and destruction. The final explosion of the film is massive and horrible, destroying hundreds.

Most of the explosions are preceded by Coburn off-handedly warning Steiger "Duck, you sucker," a phrase which moves from broad comedy, to bitter irony, to (in the final credit) a statement of near hopelessness aimed directly at the audience.

The train motif is also handled beautifully by Leone. The film opens with Steiger's robbery of a stagecoach decked out like an elaborate train. He is in control — although the coach, like other vehicles in the film, is eventually destroyed by Coburn. Later, on the train to Mesa Verde, Steiger survives the onslaught of two policemen with the help of his knife and a revolutionary doctor. The bandit is still in control, but he needs help as he enters the civilized world. In a prelude to the climax of the film, Leone has Steiger's smallest son place a toy train full of explosives before the Mesa Verde bank for Coburn to detonate. At one point, Coburn and Steiger try to escape to America, a land of promise in which they really do not believe, but their train is attacked by revolutionaries and becomes a massive murder site. The climax of the film involves Coburn's atomic-like explosion of a huge train in the midst of a huge battle. At the peak of the explosion, a sheet of metal floats down like the tree early in the film.

The film is filled with Leone touches: the vivid reality of food and the joy of eating it; the surreal discussion on ornate chairs between Steiger and Coburn on a mountain-top; the execution, in rain and darkness, under truck headlights; the sudden, huge close-up of an egg tapped and sucked by a young, villainous Mexican colonel; the over-emotional performance (in this case Steiger's) played for laughs that becomes effectively touching; the elaborate camera movements to draw humans into their environment within a single shot.

Leone will probably be discovered when he handles a more conventionally "artistic" subject. If he does, indeed, complete Céline's **Journey into Night** (which he is supposed to be working on) he will probably be hailed as an artist who has finally emerged. In fact, he will be doing no more than what he *has* been doing for half a dozen films.

Stuart M. Kaminsky

WANT TO BOOK A FILM?

Turn to page 28 for a new listing of sources for 16mm prints of films mentioned in this issue of TAKE ONE.

DUCK, YOU SUCKER!/ TWO

In **Duck, You Sucker!** Sergio Leone traces the psychic contours of a reluctant (Rod Steiger) and a recurrent (James Coburn) revolutionary during the Mexican Civil War, a time and place in which modernity abruptly and irrevocably bursts upon the horse-latitudes of nineteenth century history. The fact that Leone succeeds more with Steiger's elemental pragmatist than with Coburn's intellectual idealist indicates that he is interested not so much in psychology or the mechanics (the madness, yes) of social change as in the visceral action and reaction level of guts-and-guns revenge. Consequently, in this way at least, Leone's

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films are holdovers from an Old Testament past where men re-affirm an eye-for-an-eye moral balance by means of an unambiguous bullet of retribution more human than divine. **Duck, You Sucker!**, like Leone's Clint Eastwood westerns before it (I have yet to see **Once Upon a Time in the West**), is more morality play than psychological novel, although it pays lip service to the latter.

In this respect, Leone is unique in the western genre. Even in the existential arena of Anthony Mann and Budd Boetticher, moral effects stem from psychological causes, and the result is moral ambiguity rather than moral resolution. And if Ford's heroes and villains are most often uncoloured by moral or psychological complexities, it is because they are less important than the social solidarity their exchange of gunfire brings about. The Fordian community transcends the individual; the world continues after his death, and in this continuation is improvement.

What typifies Leone's films are their denial of a socially-coded morality, their belief in inexorable badness (not evil), and their outrageously dark and devilish humour. Along with Godard and Bunuel, Leone realizes the futility of lamenting man's condition without laughing at it as well; his humour prevents the bleakness of doubt from descending into the blackness of despair.

However, **Duck, You Sucker!** is Leone's funniest film, and that could be an indication that the tragic element of his vision is deepening, paradoxical as that may sound. In the previous films, it was rare for all the principal antagonists to end up dead: the Bad, yes, but not the Ugly. In this film, Coburn-the-Good (completely unlike Eastwood-the-Good) dies almost simultaneously with the Bad because he (Coburn) attempts to stabilize the chaos in Mexico. John Mallory/Coburn is sophisticated, intelligent, knowledgeable, modern and moral — hence expendable in the world of Sergio Leone, which is none of these, and nothing if not incurably chaotic. By the end, Mallory too becomes aware that he is very much out of place in this world, and that abstract principles are hopelessly inadequate for judging the complexities of human motivation.

But finally, how good is **Duck, You Sucker!**? Well, it has its minor problems. For one thing, the plot doesn't make too much sense, what with the Mexican army being repeatedly decimated only to loom up again in full force like some mythical many-headed Hydra. Plot aside, Steiger has always seemed to me to be the best in the business, next to Peter Sellers, at mimicking surface mannerisms without necessarily mastering the essence of his character. Even though Leone is involved in Juan (the Steiger character), Steiger camps it up for easy laughs every chance he gets. As a result, Juan is emotionally emasculated despite his mucho Mexican macho. This is particularly unfortunate in a role which demands more balls and less Broadway. Even as it stands, however, Steiger's hormonal histrionics overcompensate to such an extent that his best moments are his quietest moments — for example, when he is standing over the bodies of his massacred family, without tears, without rage, in eloquent silence.

At any rate, **Duck, You Sucker!** is more objective than **Straw Dogs** in its treatment of man's instinctual fascination with violence, it's more profoundly personal than **The Godfather,** and it's about a hundred times more emotionally honest and morally healthy than **A Clockwork Orange.** In short, if audiences can ignore the silly title on the marquee and the misleading advertising in the media, they will be treated to one of the year's most rousingly satisfying entertainments.

Gary McCallum

A former student of Robin Wood's, Gary McCallum writes from Kingston, Ontario.

THE DISCREET CHARM OF THE BOURGEOISIE

A Twentieth Century-Fox release (1972) of a Greenwich Productions film. Colour. 102 mins. Executive Producer: Serge Silberman. Director: Luis Bunuel. Screenplay: Bunuel and Jean-Claude Carrière. Photography: Edmond Richard. Editor: Hélène Plemianikoff. Cast: Fernando Rey, Delphine Seyrig, Stephane Audran, Jean-Pierre Cassel, Paul Frankeur, Bulle Ogier, Julien Bertheau, Claude Pieplu, Michel Piccoli.

The unusual thing about the title of Luis Bunuel's new film is that it should draw exactly the audience it deserves. Nobody is going to confuse this sophisticated, subtle, auto-eclectic movie with, say, a black exploitation film. Bunuel is no less class-conscious and revolutionary (in both political and stylistic senses) than Melvin van Peebles or the Gordon Parkses. What distinguishes Bunuel is that he makes telling points and satirizes the vain demi-aristocracy with a style that operates through the route of intelligence, and he achieves this with resigned good humor rather than vituperative spleen.

The Discreet Charm draws on the diverse virtues of Bunuel's earlier works. It evinces some of the surrealistic qualities of **L'âge d'Or,** the poetic social consciousness of **Los Olvidados,** a conscious self-parody of **The Exterminating Angel,** the kinkiness of **Belle de Jour** and the strangely good-natured cynicism of **Tristana.** If **The Discreet Charm** is a code book for Bunuelians, it is also a Marxian exemplum, drawing on the dialectic of Karl and Groucho. Of all Bunuel's films, **The Discreet Charm** is the most accessible — and this may explain its release by a major distributor. In fact, Bunuel seems to be parodying the obscure, impenetrable and sometimes pretentious elements of his own earlier films. But unlike Fellini, who has drawn tiresomely on the symbolism and theses of his previous movies in recent films (**The Clowns, Roma**), Bunuel works graceful variations on familiar themes, giving them incremental meaning and richness by submitting them to new approaches, transfiguring them with wit and wryness rather than savage indignation. Like Yeats' old man grown young, Bunuel at 72 assumes a posture of sage playfulness. The film generates an attitude of relieved resignation — a feeling that movies are, after all, an entertainment medium rather than a rostrum for ideological preachment or an instrument of direct social change. By assuming a posture of impishness, Bunuel seems to forgive the corruption and pettiness of the stratum of French society he depicts, even as he indicts it.

The Discreet Charm is an elegantly wrought situation comedy; a series of bizarre episodes centering on the self-indulgent shenanigans of the French bourgeoisie — six small-minded characters (including the incomparable Stephane Audran and Fernando Rey) in search of a supper that is never completed. What elevates the film — and distinguishes it from standard laughtrack fare — is the framework within which the dinner-interruptus conceit operates. Bunuel's fascination with dreams and the dream-like nature of the medium in which he works is at the center of the film. But so is the self-parody of this lifelong obsession. The structure of **The Discreet Charm** is a series of dreams within dreams, gratuitous fantasies, arbitrary divagations, recurring and unexplained motifs which underscore the obsession of the bourgeoisie with materialism and manners. Bunuel cloaks these mysteries in a shroud of jocularity, making the solution to every puzzle a burst of generous, rather than contemptuous, laughter.

Susan Rice

Susan Rice is film critic for Media and Methods *and a too-occasional contributor to TAKE ONE.*

FAT CITY

Directed by John Huston. Produced by Ray Stark. Screenplay by Leonard Gardner, based on his novel of the same name. Director of Photography, Conrad Hall. Cast: Stacy Keach, Jeff Bridges, Susan Tyrrell, Candy Clark, Nicholas Colasanto, Art Aragon, Curtis Cokes. A Columbia release.

In the course of reviewing John Huston's **The Treasure of Sierra Madre,** the late James Agee wrote, "Unlike many great films, it does not wear its art on its sleeve". Agee was right, and even today the comment can stand as a definitive statement on the director's entire career. Suspicious of flamboyant camerawork and flashy editing, Huston has always striven to unfold his stories in terms of character and

action. Perhaps "journalistic" is the word that comes closest to describing the dead-on, objective style Huston has cultivated in his best films.

And his best films were very good indeed: **The Maltese Falcon, Treasure, The African Queen** and **The Asphalt Jungle.** Four classics, along with one cult classic, **Beat the Devil,** might be enough to sustain any artist's reputation; but from the mid-'50s on, Huston's career has sputtered uncertainly through polished commercial properties (**Heaven Knows Mr. Allison, The Night of the Iguana**), ambitious, interesting failures (**The Misfits, Red Badge of Courage, Reflections In a Golden Eye**), and a group of films (**The Bible** and **The Unforgiven** to name two) that are best passed over in silence.

Furthermore, in the early '60s, the American auteur critics, hellbent on establishing their favorite directors as well as their (then) radical aesthetics, picked out Huston as a prime example of the overrated, impersonal Hollywood technicians whose glory had unjustly eclipsed such men as Preminger, Cukor and Hawks. The attack was unfair and slanted (Andrew Sarris tried to explain away Huston's four greatest films by terming them "actor's classics"), but it had the effect of substantiating the general assumption that Huston was a bright guy who had run out of steam. Orson Welles was considered an artist whose ego was too forceful for the studio bosses, but Huston was never allowed the same luxury. Perhaps all this nonsense which has been heaped upon a faltering artist will cease now that Huston, at the age of 66, has directed what is clearly his best film in more than two decades: **Fat City.**

Starting with a series of fades which lead us from an aerial view down to the streets, Huston's **Fat City** moves surely and compassionately through the city of Stockton, California, chronicling the stories of a broken-down boxer who makes one last, heartless attempt at a comeback, and a young kid who falls into the sport by accident and, just as casually, starts going places. It is one of the pleasures of the film that the two stories do not strain to counterpoint each other; they spin out naturally, intersecting at various incidental points in much the same way that you might bump into a friend on the street. Tully, the boxer, played by Stacy Keach, picks up a funny, downtrodden tramp at a bar, and lives with her until he can no longer stand it; Ernie, the kid, played by Jeff Bridges, keeps on banging a nondescript girl in the front seat of his car until he finds himself trapped in a marriage that he accepts with a shrug of his shoulders.

The structure of the screenplay (adapted by Leonard Gardner from his own novel) is dictated by the slipshod psyches of its two main characters, and not by any desire to rein the two stories into the kind of consciously geometric arrangement so common to "well made" plays or movies. **Fat City** can thus be placed in the category of "like-life films" such as **Five Easy Pieces** and **Sunday, Bloody Sunday** in which problems are lived through rather than resolved, and characters exercise little, if any, control over their fates (as opposed to "well-made" films like **The Last Picture Show** or **The Godfather**).

What's most impressive about the film is Huston's refusal to needlessly sentimentalize or editorialize. When he wants to convey the isolation and sorrow of a Mexican boxer who has just lost a fight, he uses a long shot that follows the man as he walk out of a dark, empty auditorium. No close-ups, no music; just the lonely sound of the man's shoes as they hit the concrete floor. The relationship between Tully and his girl, Oma (Susan Tyrrell), is the kind of knock-down, drunken stuff that melodrama thrives on. Instead of pushing Tyrrell's powerhouse performance into a Susan Hayward caricature that would have made Keach's boxer her victim (and the recipient of unearned audience sympathy), Huston plays fair and avoids manipulating his audience. Tully and Oma are mutually masochistic victims, and if they hadn't found each other to destroy, they'd have wound up with other, similar partners. The hateful quality of their relationship, a short season in hell for both of them, is cleverly undercut by Oma's ferociously comic energy which always surfaces at some point in their never-ending round of spats and fights.

Perhaps it is for this reason — Huston's conscious avoidance of editorializing, his refusal to color his material with melodramatic posturing — that the auteur critics have never warmed to his work. Enamored of Douglas Sirk's lush compositions and Welles' baroque qualities, they have accused Huston of failing to take a discernible stance towards his material. Is it really necessary, new journalism to the side, to point out that objectivity can also be seen as a point of view?

Fat City is a haunting lament for all the losers who might once have had a chance, and all the squalid cities that helped to rob them of it. Maybe the nicest thing you can say about the film is that James Agee, who revered Huston's earlier work, would have left it feeling vindicated. *John Kane*

THE UNHOLY ROLLERS

Directed by Vernon Zimmerman. Written by Howard R. Cohen, based on a story by Vernon Zimmerman and Howard R. Cohen. Producers, John Prizer and Jack Bohrer. Editors, George Trirogoff and Yeu-Buh Yee. Music: Louie and the Rockets. Cast: Claudia Jennings, Louis Quinn, Betty Anne Rees, Roberta Collins, Alan Vint, Candice Roman, Kathleen Freeman, John Harmon, others. A Roger Corman Production. Color. Released by AIP.

The Unholy Rollers, directed by ex-undergrounder Vernon Zimmerman (director: **Lemon Hearts;** 1st assistant: **Flower Thief)** and produced by Roger Corman is an action-packed Roller Derby flick. For starters.

I've never been to a Derby game, and I missed **Kansas City Bomber,** so I have no idea where the film stands in relation to reality or Raquel Welch. I do know that the music is mostly by Chuck Berry, the POV skating footage is breath-taking, and Claudia Jennings' performance as Karen, an angry young Roller Derby star, is so real it's scary.

Rollers is primarily a comedy, a *divertissement,* and this is neither the time nor the place for a lengthy analysis of the existential meaning of the Derby. Nonetheless, there's a lot happening beneath the surface — mostly in terms of strange, surrealistic dialogue that keeps popping up in odd corners of the soundtrack, and over the Derby PA during the games. There's also a continuing discussion between Stern (the owner of the team) and Marshall (his assistant) that pertains as much to the making of exploitation pictures as it does to running a Derby team. What I'm trying to say is that Zimmerman plays his movie on as many levels as he can, but without losing track of the fact that he's making a mass-market action film. This is a good way to make pictures.

Several sequences stand out: a terrifically funny scene in which Karen blows her stack and quits her job at the cat food factory, throwing the production line into fast forward and walking away; a high-energy skating strip-tease (with *Sweet Little 16* on the soundtrack) shot with a hand-held moving camera leading Karen, who's leading Nick — both skating their asses off; several overhead fisheye shots of action on the track; and a surprise ending that really is a surprise, except it's the only possible ending (which you don't realize until it happens).

Claudia Jennings carries the film. Her characterization of a woman so angry that she becomes, in some strange way, an all-avenging Kali figure, is fascinating. In the movies, women are usually helpless, sad, or (at the most) piqued. Karen is pissed-off, boiling, crazy mad ANGRY — an emotional firestorm that makes **Unholy Rollers** a disturbing and powerful experience.

Zimmerman's film was supposed to beat **Kansas City Bomber** by a couple of weeks, but AIP blew it (as usual) by holding up the final cutting. The reason I mention it is that this film *feels* like the first of a series; it opens up a genre that has plenty of untouched potential. It's a good movie.

(Zimmerman has another film nearly out: **Deadhead Miles,** a truck-driving

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movie. On the basis of **Unholy Rollers,** I'd recommend it sight unseen. It's got truck driving songs, too.)

Michael Goodwin

THE KING OF MARVIN GARDENS

Produced and Directed by Bob Rafelson. Written by Jacob Brackman, based on a story by Bob Rafelson and Jacob Brackman. Executive Producer, Steve Blauner. Photography, Laszlo Kovacs. Cast: Jack Nicholson, Bruce Dern, Ellen Burstyn, Julia Anne Robinson, Benjamin "Scatman" Crothers. A BBS Production. Colour. 1972. 103 minutes.

At the start of **The King of Marvin Gardens,** we witness Jack Nicholson relating a painful childhood incident, much in the style of the monologue that opens **Weekend.** We then find out that he is emptying his soul to a Philadelphia radio audience, and that a good deal of his story is complete fabrication. Near the end of the movie he delivers a similar speech, only this time the facts are true, and he is sobbing uncontrollably. What happens in between is an original, deeply moving examination of a group of aimless, deluded individuals.

While not as immediately accessible or "entertaining" as **Five Easy Pieces,** the last Rafelson-Nicholson collaboration, **Marvin Gardens** is at least equally disturbing in its bleak view of lives spent in the off-season. David Staebler is an FM talk-jockey, summoned by his brother Jason (Bruce Dern) to a rundown Atlantic City hotel to participate in an island-buying deal. His life becomes crossed with Jason's two women, Sally (Ellen Burstyn) and her step-daughter (Julia Anne Robinson), and the illusions conjured up among them. Former *Esquire* film critic Jacob Brackman has fashioned his first screenplay as a series of vignettes, each revealing a separate corner of the character's psyche — culminating in a spontaneous burst of violence in a hotel room.

Nicholson, to his credit, has not attempted to duplicate a previous portrayal. Here is an insecure, introspective man who uses radio as his medium of expression simply because nobody reads anymore and he "craves an audience." He even prefers to tape his shows on cassettes to make the art of creation more personal. While many of David's quirks and accoutrements (white shirt, skinny tie, nasal spray) are exaggerated, Nicholson's performance is consistent and generally effective. Dern, long a fine actor (**Wild Angels, They Shoot Horses**), has a fleshed-out role as Nicholson's more charismatic brother, and does well with it. The contrast between the two is rather too pronounced, but they play well together. Ellen Burstyn gives a rich, detailed characterization (based slightly on the mother-daughter sexual competitiveness she conveyed in **Picture Show**), and newcomer Julia Anne Robinson is fine, if a bit overshadowed, in her role as the winsome, sophisticated step-daughter.

In such a segmented film as this, where the pace is deliberate and slow-moving, certain incidents stand out as more crucial and illuminating than others. Among the finest scenes is the mock Miss America pageant in an empty Convention Center, where Jessica acts out her fantasy while David plays Bert Parks, Jason the audience and Sally (on whom the symbolism is not lost) last year's queen who turns over the crown. Just as Jessica makes her walk down the runway, the spot operator shuts the lights, ending the charade. The final scene, where David's grandfather projects home movies on his bedroom wall, is very touching as the 8mm image mingles with the staircase, the older David, and his grandfather before shutting off, ending both movies.

What makes **The King of Marvin Gardens** work, finally, despite occasional lapses and awkward moments, is its intelligence and a care for capturing glimpses of people and incidents that are truthful, if "comically unworthy" of any greater significance. Without flamboyant technique or over-indulgence, Rafelson and Brackman make a meaningful statement on the human potential for violence, and the need to examine even the most innocent of lives.

Mitchell S. Cohen

Mitchell S. Cohen is a Cinema Studies student at NYU, working on a Masters.

PLAY IT AS IT LAYS

A Universal release (1972). Colour. 103 mins. Producer and Director: Frank Perry. Screenplay: Joan Didion and John Gregory Dunne, from the novel by Didion. Director of Photography: Jordan Cronenweth. Editor: Sidney Katz. Cast: Tuesday Weld, Anthony Perkins, Tammy Grimes, Adam Roarke, Ruth Ford, Eddie Firestone, Diana Ewing, Paul Lambert, Chuck McCann, Severn Darden.

Could it be that a totally new movie genre is emerging in the late 60's/early 70's--a variety of film in which no less than a quarter of the running time is devoted to driving? Films like **Beyond the Valley of the Dolls, The Model Shop,** and now **Play It As It Lays** draw on the California Freeway for the ultimate Meaning of Non-meaning. Russ Meyer's montage of traffic signs was considerably more subtle and highly crafted than Frank Perry's recent reworking of this metaphor. (It embarrasses me that I should suggest any particular virtue in Russ Meyer.)

Movie reviewers are supposed to be guides of a sort, and I think it will help you a great deal in viewing this movie to know that the actual highway that we see on the screen is really a symbol for the Super Highway of Life — with its twists and turns, its arid stretches, its ups and downs, its ins and outs, its stops and goes, its one ways and no exits, its bumps and grinds. Joan Didion manages to get away with this metaphor in her spacey novel about California *angst* because her style is so straightforward and unaffected, because she addresses clichés so matter-of-factly. Frank Perry approaches Didion's heartless, lean vision of Tinseltown anomie with his own limp imitation of Resnais and Antonioni. With its pretentious confusion of tenses (Hollywood's way of making a banal story seem sophisticated and complex), **Play It As It Lays** emerges as a **Last Year at Beverly Hills** with Tuesday Weld acting passive and passing actively in the manner of Monica Vitti. The stinging *ennui* of movie colonials is a rather rarified and somewhat off-putting version of estrangement — rich, bitchy people bathing in self-loathing and chlorine.

Frank Perry **(David and Lisa, The Swimmer, Last Summer, Diary of a Mad Housewife, Doc)** aspires eagerly to the status of Major Director. In a recent interview, he allowed as how he was much influenced by Kubrick's **Clockwork Orange** in the making of **Play It As It Lays.** He claims to have adapted Didion's relentless rendering of total emotional breakdown with the same clinical detachment that Kubrick applied to Burgess' treatment of futuristic violence. There was some irony involved in diagramming physical acts of sadism with balletic distance. But there is something perversely self-defeating in the portrayal of complex inner states and tortured emotions with Appolonian rigor.

Paradoxically, Perry delivers the fevered message of Didion's novel with the very minimum of feeling. Even the suicide scene, the high dramatic point of the film, registers zero on the emotional seismograph. This may be a challenge for the director and perhaps a valiant attempt to preserve the mood of the novel, but it is a wearing experience for the audience, and one that yields little illumination. If **Play It As It Lays** were a dense, rich work that required some kind of mediated reflection, the film might have been successful. But this kind of speculation is idle, for what we have is a highly accessible (dare I say obvious?) piece of work clothed in slick visuals that effect a kind of mindless energy.

The one gratifying aspect of the film is the performances by Tuesday Weld and Anthony Perkins, who manage to make these effete, cryptic, passive characters compelling. Both actors evoke compassion while exercising restraint. The greatest failing of the film is that it treats its protagonists as victims of circumstance, casualties of conspicuous consumption. I see them as sufferers of a severe lack of imagination — a disease that prompts impatience rather than pathos. And this, for me, was the net effect of the film.

Susan Rice

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On the third night of the Canadian Film Awards screenings in Toronto this October, there were maybe twenty-five people in the audience. (Even the jury, which included such notables as Satyajit Ray and Dusan Makavejev, was elsewhere — though we were assured that some of them, at least, would catch up at a private screening next morning.) Apparently Torontonians don't care to spend two dollars on French-Canadian films without subtitles.

Last year it was different. There was only one Quebec film (subtitled), and the screenings were free. That one film was **Mon Oncle Antoine,** which cleaned out the Awards (as it also had at Chicago), got a lot of good publicity, and subsequently opened for a long run in Toronto. This year quite a few Quebec producers recognized the possibilities, and the Film Awards committee in turn recognized Quebec filmmakers, to the extent of opening a Montreal office. And somebody decided that all those happy people who had milled around the St. Lawrence Centre last year might mill no less happily at two dollars a head, per night.

Result: several of the more interesting Quebec films, not to mention some products of English Canada, got virtually no audience and no publicity, and will never be seen in Toronto again. Next year the screenings are to be held in Montreal. I suspect it will be a really exciting week as an energetic film culture gets together to celebrate its own vitality. In English Canada, by contrast, you get the feeling that the various people producing movies have never heard of each other, and don't give a shit.

Big Winners for 1972: as in 1970 the jury hedged its bet by separating Best Director (Gilles Carle, **La vraie nature de Bernadette**) from Best Film **(Wedding in White,** written and directed by Bill Fruet). However, by picking up Best Screenplay (Carle himself) and three other awards, **Bernadette** may be said to have won on points. **The Rowdyman** joined the honours list with Best Actor for Gordon Pinsent. **Le temps d'une chasse** (the only other Quebec film besides **Bernadette** to be subtitled) earned Best Newcomer for director Francis Mankiewicz, and a photography award for Michel Brault. And Mireille Dansereau's **La vie rêvée** received the Wendy Michener Award.

Some special mentions: **Les Colombes,** social comedy turned melodrama by Jean-Claude Lord (plastic, but superbly moulded); **Proxyhawks** by Jack Darcus (the same Gerald Pratley who kept Cronenberg's **Stereo** out of competition a few years back said that he would have excluded Darcus' intense and serious drama of psychic combat if there had been any pre-selection of feature films; got to keep an eye on Gerald!); **A Fan's Notes** (Warner Bros. continued to savage their own offspring by withdrawing it from the screenings at the last minute); and **Les Smattes** (a vehemently anti-establishment story of oppression in rural Quebec, by Jean-Claude Labrecque).

Twenty films were entered in the Feature category; some reviews follow.

Bob Fothergill

Bob Fothergill is an intermittent filmmaker presently teaching English at York University and awaiting inspiration.

There was nothing wrong with the 1972 Canadian Film Awards that a little money couldn't have cured. Denied a Canada Council grant to defray expenses, the C.F.A. was obliged to charge admission to its evening screenings and a $100 entry fee for features. This meant they accepted several unspeakable features (for monetary reasons) which otherwise wouldn't have passed a selection committee and eight French-Canadian films were shown without subtitles because there weren't sufficient funds to provide translation. This in turn reduced the press coverage in English newspapers, which in turn reduced public interest in the event, as attendance fell off conspicuously. It is a great irony that the want of a few thousand dollars should have so many unfortunate ramifications. It took five days with continuous screenings from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 a.m. to view the entries: 103 films, 20 of them features intended for theatrical release. Among them:

Quelques Arpents de Neige (Several Acres of Snow) by skin-flick pioneer Denis Héroux (**Valerie, L'Initiation**) is the best bad movie I've seen in years. Remember the 1837 Rebellion in Lower Canada? When all the French girls were impeccably groomed and beautiful, the men rugged and handsome, quoting Racine during their courtships, and lush, romantic music played all the time. Héroux's film is a Habitant's version of **Ryan's Daughter** and an unintentional parody of the historical epic genre. It is customary, in making an historical film, to defuse passions which prompted war from a cooler perspective that was lacking at the time, but Héroux's ambition is to inflame passion. He tries so hard to romanticize the past for present-day Québécois that he renders the events incomprehensible. There is talk of famine and oppression but who can believe it with all those gorgeous costumes and that glamorous make-up? The English are poor, plain, ratty soldiers who trudge through the landscape in their drab grey coats, looking forlorn, clutching their rifles and shivering. Héroux doesn't like them but he unwittingly makes them underdogs. All the French seem concerned with is whether or not they'll run out of eyeshadow.

Proxyhawks is a 16mm feature, written, edited, produced and directed by Vancouver filmmaker Jack Darcus who also plays one of the two leads. If that weren't bravado enough, the film has Bergmanesque pretensions. The story is that of a couple in their late 20s living on a desolate stretch of British Columbia's coastline. There isn't much dialogue (a blessing) but the film powerfully conveys the psychological deterioration of a woman

(Susan Spencer) who retreats into a hysterical silence over what she perceives as the unremitting aggression and cruelty of men. The ending, wholly believable and cautiously happy, shows the couple surviving their conflicts and continuing their marriage. **Proxyhawks** wages a battle between discipline (which Darcus clearly realizes is necessary) and a fecund imagination (which threatens to lose control) and it is exhilarating to watch this tightrope act successfully executed. Produced on the astonishingly low budget of $16,000 and a work of prodigious promise.

Les Colombes (The Doves) does delightfully well for the first hour and then takes a dive. It stars Jean Duceppe (who played the title role in **Mon Oncle Antoine**) and a fine supporting cast of Jean Besré, Lise Thouin and Jean Coutu. It begins in the comic vein of **Lovers and Other Strangers,** portraying the misunderstandings between two families of contrasting background that are joined by a marriage between their children. Family life has rarely been funnier, marriage has rarely been so lovingly depicted, but just as the film is doing superbly well as a buoyant farce, it veers into melodrama. The last 20 minutes, when the sweetly eccentric uncle (Duceppe) suffocates a child, suggest that writer-director Jean-Claude Lord accumulated so many different plots in his seven year absence from films, that he decided to throw them all in together. There are moments to treasure in this film and it's a pity that Lord didn't see that adding more would give him less.

Montreal Blues by Pascal Gélinas is in the semi-autobiographical vein of Claude Jutra's **À Tout Prendre.** It's ten years later, the youth culture bubble of the 60s has burst, friends have fallen out, lovers have parted, the walls are closing in. What to do? Where to go? Like Jutra's film, Gélinas' first feature is exceptionally charming and mutedly melancholy, but unfortunately there is little substance to be charming or melancholy about. A view of youth as fallen angels shows not the correction of naivety but the persistence of it. Perhaps with his feelings expressed and the subject out of his system. Gélinas will set his sights higher in the future. He clearly has talent.

Finally there was **Mirror, Mirror,** an eleven minute, 16mm colour short by Michael Asti-Rose, a virtuoso piece, so beautifully photographed, edited and printed with complex optical work, that it should be seen in every film school in the country. It's one of the finest

A 16mm Booker's Guide to Sources of Films Mentioned in This Issue.

Adagio. Canada: National Film Board, P.O. Box 6100, Montreal 101, Quebec, and regional offices. USA: Schoenfeld Film Dist. Corp., 165 West 46th Street, New York, New York 10036.

Baby Face Harrington. (?) M.G.M., 10202 West Washington Blvd., Culver City, Calif. 90231.

Bananas. United Artists 16, 729 Seventh Ave., New York, New York 10019.

Blood Money. (?) UA16.

Bonnie and Clyde. Canada: Warner Bros. Inc., Non-Theatrical Division, 70 Carlton St., Toronto, Ont. USA: 4000 Warner Blvd., Burbank, Calif. 91505.

Bullets or Ballots. UA16.

Cabaret. Hurlock Cine World, 13 Arcadia Road, Old Greenwich, Conn. 06870.

The Chelsea Girls. Filmmakers Coop, 175 Lexington Avenue, New York, N.Y.

Les Colombes. Films Mutuels, 225 Roy Street East, Montreal 131, Quebec.

The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie. Canada: BelleVue Film Distributors Ltd., 277 Victoria Street, Toronto 205, Ont. USA: Twentieth Century-Fox, 444 West 56th Street, New York, N.Y. 10019.

Duck, You Sucker! UA16.

Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Sex... UA16.

A Fan's Notes. N.A. (Warner-Bros.)

Fat City. Canada: Columbia Pictures, 72 Carlton St., Toronto 200, Ontario. USA: Columbia Cinematheque, 711 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10022.

Frenzy. Canada: Universal 16, 2450 Victoria Park Ave., Willowdale 425, Ont. USA: 445 Park Avenue, New York, New York 10022.

Godzilla vs. the Smog Monster. Canada: Astral Films, 224 Davenport Rd., Toronto 180, Ont. USA: American International Pictures Inc., 9033 Wilshire Blvd., Beverly Hills, Calif. 90211.

Gun Crazy. Hurlock.

High Sierra. UA16.

Invasion of the Body Snatchers. Ivy Film 16, 165 West 46th Street, New York, N.Y. 10036.

Journey. N.A. (Astral.)

The King of Marvin Gardens. Columbia.

The Lawless. (?) Paramount Pictures, 1 Gulf & Western Plaza, New York, N.Y. 10023.

The Maltese Falcon (Huston 1941). UA16.

The Maltese Falcon (Roy del Ruth, 1931; also known as "Dangerous Female"). UA16.

Marked Woman. UA16.

Mirror, Mirror. Canadian Film-Makers' Distribution Centre, Room 2041, 341 Bloor Street, Toronto 181, Ontario.

Mon Oncle. Walter Reade 16, 241 East 34th Street, New York, N.Y. 10016.

Mon Oncle Antoine. Astral.

Montreal Blues. France Film Ltée., 1405 Alexandre de Sève, Montreal 205, Québec.

Night of the Cobra Woman. Canada: Astral. USA:AIP.

Pas de Deux. Canada: NFB. USA: Columbia.

Peut-Être Maurice Richard. NFB.

The Phenix City Story. Hurlock.

Play it Again, Sam. Paramount.

Play it as it Lays. N.A. (Universal.)

Proxyhawks. Cdn. Film-Makers' Dist'n. Ctr.

Québec: Duplessis et après. NFB.

Quelques arpents de neige. Films Mutuels.

Quick Millions. (?) Canada: BelleVue. USA: Twentieth Century-Fox.

The Rowdyman. Crawley Distribution, P.O. Box 580, Station F, Toronto 185, Ontario.

Satan Met a Lady. UA16.

The Secret Six. Films Incorporated, 1144 Wilmette Avenue, Wilmette, Illinois 60091.

The Sky Pirate. New Line Cinema, 121 University Place, New York, N.Y. 10003.

Les smattes. Les Films Faroun, 136 Saint Paul St. East, Montreal 127, Quebec.

Take the Money and Run. Canada: International Film Distributors, 20 Bloor Street West, Toronto 189, Ontario. USA: Films Inc.

Le temps d'une chasse. Cinépix, 8275 Mayrand Street, Montreal 308, Quebec.

The Thirty-Nine Steps. Canada: Janus Film Library, 224 Davenport Road, Toronto 180, Ontario. USA: Janus Films, 24 West 58th Street, New York, N.Y. 10023.

The Trial of the Catonsville Nine. Cinema 5, 595 Madison Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10022.

Under Milkwood. Altura Films International Inc., 225 East 46th Street, New York, N.Y. 10017.

The Unholy Rollers. Canada: Astral. USA: AIP.

La vie rêvée. Les Films Faroun.

La vraie nature de Bernadette. France Film.

Wedding in White. N.A. (Canada: Cinépix. USA: Avco-Embassy Pictures, 1301 Avenue of the Americas, New York, N.Y. 10019.)

You and Me. (?) Paramount.

ADDITIONS AND CORRECTIONS:

Nyoka, The Jungle Girl. (Vol. 3, No. 6). Ivy Film 16.

While based on sources we believe reliable and up-to-date, TAKE ONE cannot guarantee the accuracy of any of the above information, nor assume any liability for the results of any mis-information given. We will be happy to print additions and corrections in future issues.

Symbols: (?) beside a title indicates that we have not been able to determine the present 16mm distributor of the film in question. Where (?) precedes the name of a film company, that company is usually the original producer of the film. N.A. indicates that that film is not presently available in 16mm non-theatrically. Where N.A. precedes the name of a distributor, that is the firm currently handling the 35mm version of the film theatrically.

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experimental films since the early work of Jean Cocteau and Luis Bunuel. It's content is mystifying, mythological, and probably nonsense (the credits give thanks to Carl Jung among others) but the film technique is ravishing. It accomplished more in its brief running time than all of the sprawling, confused features. A perfect example of talent with discipline. It was a welcome treat to find a filmmaker who takes up only as much of one's time as he or she can reward with concentrated inventiveness.

John Hofsess

WEDDING IN WHITE ONE

Directed by William Fruet. Produced by John Vidette. Written by William Fruet. Photography, Richard Leiterman. Music, Milan Kymlicka. Art Direction, Karen Bromley. Cast:Carol Kane, Donald Pleasance, Doris Petrie, Leo Phillips, Christine Thomas, Paul Bradley, Doug McGrath, Bonnie Carol Case. A Dermet Production. Colour. 140 minutes.

Wedding in White is a Canadian film put together like those old Swiss pocket-watches. Open the watch up and inside you see all the perfectly interlocking gears, very much like the various characters in the film, inextricably meshed in each others' circle of existence. The main characters are the Dougals, a Second World War family suffering under the delusions of the father, a First World War veteran. Jeannie Dougal, the naive sixteen year old daughter, has been raped by her brother's army pal, and when her father discovers she is pregnant he forces her into marriage with his old war crony, to save the "honour" of his house.

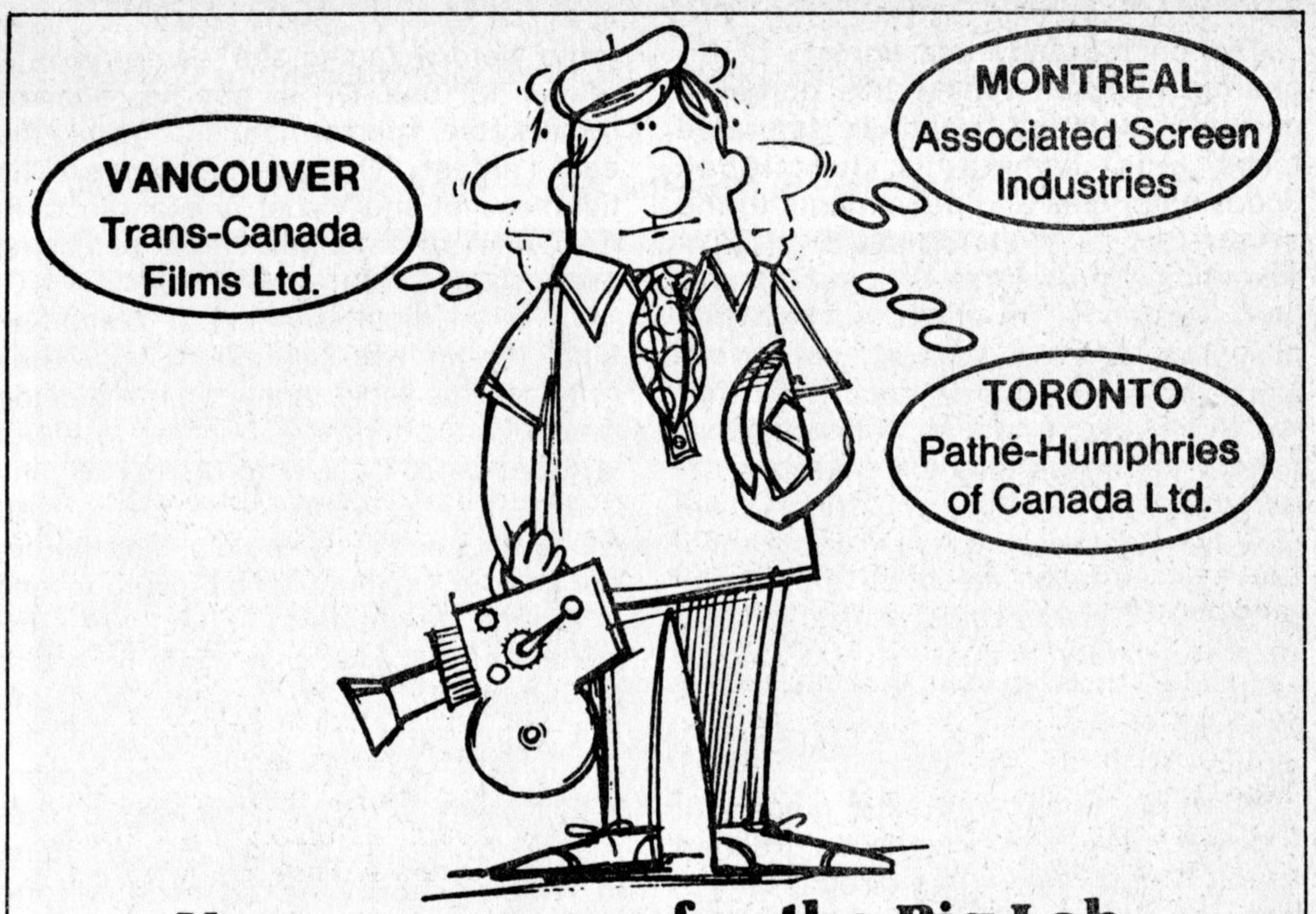
It's not a happy film, but it leaves a good feeling. The atmosphere is dense and full of vitality: the men are boozy self-centred loudmouths interested in anything that comes easy or feels good, while the women are grim and self-sacrificing, hiding their romantic fantasies behind tight-lipped determination. They are all confined to the rigid patterns that their 1943 standards demand, and when a crisis occurs they naturally apply simplistic solutions that solve nothing and only perpetuate the problem.

While the basic story of **Wedding in White** reaches us by its simplicity and poignancy, a far greater impression is left by the depth of its insight into human nature — a scrupulous attention to the nuances of character that tend to give commonplace situations uncommon qualities.

A scene that illustrates this occurs in a restaurant as Jeannie and her floozie friend Dollie seek refuge from two soldiers they met at a dance. It is principally a scene of relief, intercut with a heavier scene happening simultaneously at the legion hall. The girls slip into a booth and light up cigarettes, pretending to ignore the two soldiers following them. Jeannie takes a beginner's puff, quickly places an anxious hand on her throat and rubs her watery eyes. She does it almost apologetically, as if no one is looking at her, while her girlfriend takes a confident drag, exhales casually and lets the smoke drift over her face. Dollie doesn't even blink as she eyes the two stalwarts who ask if they might join the girls at the table. She says, "It's a free country," to no one in particular. Jeannie unconsciously repeats the phrase, and gets an elbow from Dollie. The boys sit down and one begins a routine trying to imitate popular radio voices of the day, doing an obviously terrible job. His buddy loves it nevertheless and can't contain his hysterical guffaws. So they carry on oblivious of the girls, who stare in sincere disbelief.

It's a minor scene, as Hatty Smith and her husband Barney in the legion hall scene are minor characters; but throughout the film minor scenes and characters serve to vignette the major themes with distinctly human touches. The smoking scene in the restaurant could have been a cute caricature of awkward adolescence, played for the punch lines or breezed over for the sake of expediency. But handled by director Fruet, it takes on an intimate quality that reflects experiences common to us all. The pace is smooth, the action is neatly unassuming, and the total effect is entirely believable.

John Hudecki writes for the Hamilton Spectator, *in Ontario.*



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The photography and lighting of Richard Leiterman render this domestic portrait in soft and beautifully saturated tones. His camera is functional, choosing angles and movements to the advantage of the dramatic action. Sometimes he injects a documentary-styled urgency, as in the scene when the father is told his daughter is pregnant. At other times, such as the moving scene when Mrs. Dougal discovers Jeannie's plight, Leiterman expertly adopts a more theatrical style. It is honest and sensitive photography.

He is complemented by the art direction of Karen Bromley. From the fanatical military display of Mr. Dougal to the bits of Woolworth-type sculptures decorating the home, every detail is vintage 1943.

That the many intricate pieces fit together so well must finally be credited to Bill Fruet, making his directorial debut. The fact that he took the sensible step of testing **Wedding in White** on the stage of the Poor Alex Theatre in Toronto before facing the cameras is a reason for this. On screen he receives remarkable performances from the cast, notably Donald Pleasance. The tightness of the visual and audio continuity is perhaps the most satisfying aspect of the film.

It is a most significant Canadian film. The industry in this country has reached the stage now when outside money can dictate what the product will be; and Canadians jump at any chance to work with a really big budget. Certainly many Canadian filmmakers are on the exploitation bandwagon and probably won't ever look back. The importance of **Wedding in White** is that at its heart is a sad, personal story, and Bill Fruet has the courage and the ability to bring that heart to the screen. It follows no formula, and it has no cinematic wonders to display. But **Wedding in White** is a work of art because one important and universal ingredient emanates from the film: humanity.

John Hudecki

WEDDING IN WHITE/TWO

For the first time, three good English-Canadian films will have opened in Montreal by the end of this year. **Wedding in White** and **The Rowdyman** in English versions only; and **Journey** with its French version, **Détour.** Since no English-Canadian film has yet made its mark in Quebec, it will be interesting to follow the careers of these films here. Before commenting on **Wedding in White** (which is still, at writing, doing good business in its fourth week) it might be worthwhile to situate English-Canadian films in general as they are viewed from Quebec.

The English-Canadian cinema is still a rare species in Quebec. Whether they come from Toronto, Vancouver, or even from within Quebec itself, these films find life in La Belle Province difficult. They appear briefly on the screens in Montreal, never leave the city to visit the smaller towns, and disappear abruptly after a week or two, returning to another part of Canada where hopefully the conditions are more conducive to long life.

In part, the problem is cultural. Aside from the National Film Board films and those by Paul Almond, the films are never sub-titled or dubbed. Although the distributors cling desperately to the myth that Montreal is an English-speaking city, the fact is that too few people will come out to see films which are not carefully publicized and which are not readily accessible in one's mother tongue. (In Quebec, five out of the six million people who live here do not speak English.) As for the publicity, the attitude is rather defeatist. The promotional campaigns are geared to the English press, the films open rather inconspicuously, and little effort is made to create the gala atmosphere which means so much for the success of films in Quebec. Several films have been critical successes — **Prologue, Goin' Down the Road** and **A Married Couple** — but there has not yet been a commercial success in Quebec for an English-Canadian film.

The evolution of English-Canadian films has been difficult. A few years back, when the steam was just building to get an industry going in Canada, the English-speaking filmmakers aimed right away at the kind of film which could make it in the international market. They weren't immediately successful and production possibilities were reduced. Today, these directors are still searching for an audience, and it is interesting to note that the English-language films which have been successful (eg. **Goin' Down the Road** and **The Rowdyman**) are those which reflect a certain provincialism.

The evolution in Quebec has been different. Given the chance to make films, the Québécois director started out to film for the local public. Not directly aiming at the international market, he filmed in French and reflected the lifestyles and interests special to the province. The public in Quebec gave great support to the filmmaker and production opportunities multiplied. Today, with several years of solid experience, some of the filmmakers of Quebec are ready and interested in confronting the international market. Judging from the returns on the investments of the Canadian Film Development Corp., the Quebec film industry has a few years' head start on the English-Canadian sector.

If there is a unifying factor in the success of Canadian films, it is identity. All of the successful films, from **La Vie Heureuse de Léopold Z** to **La Vraie Nature de Bernadette,** from **Goin' Down the Road** to **The Rowdyman,** have been films with well-defined identifications with regional Canadian populations. These films could not be mistaken for American films. The lesson seems to be that the Canadian public would rather see an American film than a non-descript Canadian one. But that when the film is closely identified to Canada, and well made besides, the local public is ready to support it. Whether this same public is ready to brave the language barrier inside Canada

remains to be seen. **Mon Oncle Antoine** is still the only film which could be called successful in several parts of Canada. For **Mon Oncle**, the publicity given at the Canadian Film Awards opened the way to its success in Western Canada. This year, it may be **Wedding in White**'s turn to profit — this time in Quebec — from the Film Awards.

Wedding in White leaves a strange impression for the French-speaking viewer. At first, one's reaction is that the film is more English than Canadian. The general atmosphere, the patriotism toward England, the tea-time scenes around the dinner table, the manners and speech of the characters, all seem to reflect England more than Canada. But then, a Québécois is seldom exposed to English Canada and isn't familiar with the whole of Canadian reality. Once the film has ended, it becomes clear that **Wedding in White** is profoundly Canadian, profoundly English-Canadian. Through a story about one family, Fruet has reconstituted the life-style of that ethnic group which does come from the British Isles and among whom the identification with the Mother Country is still strong. Not only is much attention paid to the physical decor but the values of this family are well-defined throughout the film.

Fruet, however, was not principally concerned with the creation of an atmosphere. Firstly, he needed to tell a story, and a banal one at that. As that story unfolds, the psychological misery of this family is revealed and a suffocating sadness, which is the very substance of the film, pervades.

In its structure, the film has two parts, corresponding precisely with the time before Jeannie's pregnancy is revealed and afterwards. At first, the film is almost sociological, describing one family which must resemble thousands of others. These families, living in forgotten corners of small towns throughout Canada, their roots and allegiances going back to the British Isles, are going nowhere. In the film, the importance of the military life, and the absence of any real sense of war, was striking. The camera moves out from the house to film the legion hall, a greasy snack bar, a car moving down the road. The carrying on of the tradition, the ritual of drinking with the buddies, the passivity and obedience of the women as they carry on their weary tasks, all these are important because they tie one to the past, they refuse to let the future penetrate. The way of life described in this first part, with its staleness and monotony, is not particular to Jeannie's family but seems to define many families who, being honest and well-meaning, are trying to make the best of a difficult situation they hardly identify.

The psychological drama is intensified in the moment that Jeannie confides in her mother. Now the camera, like Jeannie herself, is confined to the house. One effect of this confinement is to accentuate the theatrical feeling of the film, with characters inevitably entering the front door and exiting up the stairway. But this closed, punishing atmosphere in the second part — with the suffering of the parents and especially of the mother — creates a tightly drawn, intense sequence. Only the mother, well played by Doris Petrie, is able to imagine that Jeannie might be permitted to stay home and to have her baby. This affront to the traditions, to the "honor" of the family is ultimately an unacceptable alternative to the father, but in the scene in which she reminds her husband of their courtship and wedding, the result — itself — of an unwanted pregnancy, the tension is palpable.

This extremely tense and dramatic tone is what makes **Wedding in White** an exception in Canadian filmmaking. Seldom has a film here had this density and been able to sustain itself inside a rather narrow range of emotions. The actors and actresses are excellent and well directed. In this film, everything rings true. Its simplicity and sensitivity make it one of Canada's great dramatic films.

Jean-Pierre Tadros

Jean-Pierre Tadros is film critic for the Montreal daily Le Devoir *and editor-publisher of the monthly* Cinéma Québec. *He was a member of the jury of this year's Canadian Film Awards.*

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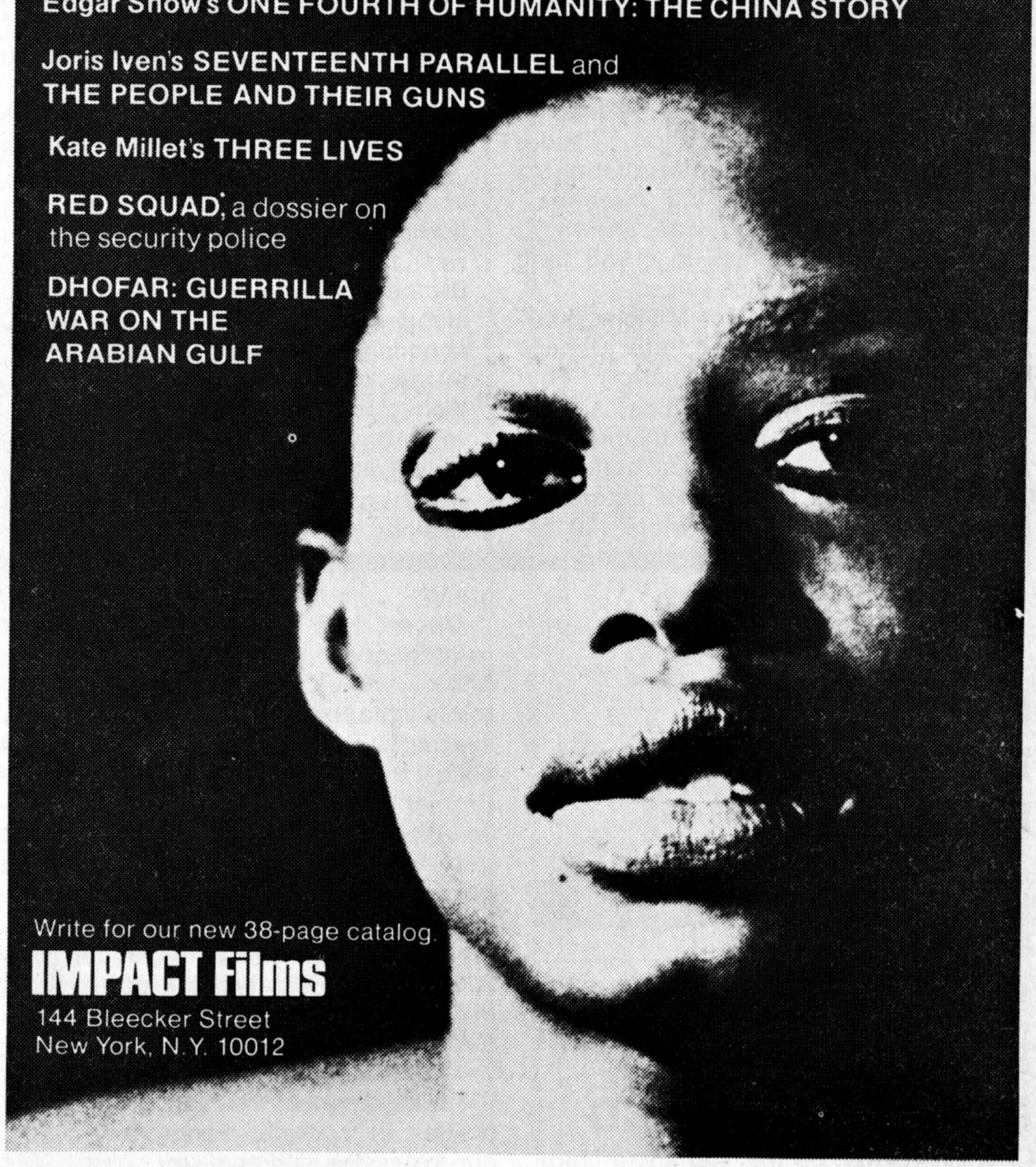

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A FAN'S NOTES

Directed by Eric Till. Written by William Kinsolving. Editor, Michael Manne. Photography, Harry Makin. Music, Ron Collier. Cast: Jerry Orbach, Patricia Collins, Burgess Meredith, Julia Robinson, Rosemary Murphy.

Since 1967 Eric Till has made four feature films, but though each has been a finely made, sensitive film, in three of four cases the films (and Till) have been screwed by their producers and/or distributors.

A Great Big Thing, Till's first film, was shot in Montreal from an original script that Till discovered when it was submitted to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (where Till had a well-earned reputation as one of the CBC's top directors). **A Great Big Thing** was shown at the Berlin Festival in 1968 and almost nowhere else since.

Till's next film, **Hot Millions,** starred Maggie Smith and Peter Ustinov (who also wrote the script). That **Hot Millions** was a critical and financial success despite its thin story is due largely to Till's controlled direction and handling of actors. To date it is his only film which has received proper distribution.

Similar success might have been expected for Till's next film, **The Walking Stick.** It was from a novel by Winston Graham, starred Samantha Eggar and David Hemmings and did get released — sort of. Trouble was that it was made for MGM which went through one of its changes in regimes while Till was finishing the film. The new regime announced that all the films started by the previous regime were dogs. To prove their point they dumped them on the market with as little support as they could possibly give them. (In Toronto **The Walking Stick** played one week in one of the smallest theatres in town with virtually no publicity.)

Till persevered and began work on **A Fan's Notes.** This time his producer pulled out while the film was still being shot and Warner Brothers, who were financing it along with the CFDC, threatened to abandon it — holding up production a few times while they made up their minds. (Warner Brothers also went through a change of regime while Till was working for them.)

Till managed to finish the film, but not to Warner Brothers' liking. They decided that a tragi-comedy about a psychopathic alcoholic wasn't very commercial. They wanted it to be a *comedy* — with no prefixes. So they cut a few things: things that were depressing or made the hero too unsympathetic. They especially cut these things near the end so that the film would have a more "up" ending. (You probably thought the demand for happy endings died with the old Hollywood. It turns out that the old Hollywood is alive and well and living in Los Angeles.)

A Fan's Notes still seems to me to be a damn fine film, but though the cuts don't kill it they do hurt it. (It's difficult for me to give an opinion on the film — having seen the original version I may be reading things into the present version that aren't really there anymore.) Warner Brothers still hasn't announced whether they're releasing the film in the US and they made a point of not entering it in the Canadian Film Awards.

Meanwhile Eric Till has begun work on his next project, a film version of Roch Carrier's novel *La Guerre, Yes Sir!* Hopefully this one will get released the way Till made it.

Joe Medjuck

QUEBEC: DUPLESSIS ET APRÈS

Directed and Edited by Denys Arcand. Photography, Elaine Dostie and Réo Grégoire. Sound, Serge Beauchemin and Jacques Drouin. Music, La Chorale de l'Église de Deschambault. Produced by the NFB.

PEUT-ÊTRE MAURICE RICHARD

One revelation of the Canadian Film Awards was the existence of a lively Hollywood of the North - Montreal - producing French versions of such historical spectaculars as **Dr. Zhivago** in Denis Héroux's **Quelques arpents de neige.** While most of these films from Quebec are firmly rooted in a social reality, the separation of politics and romance is generally pretty complete. This does not mean, however, that the political film, attempting to capture the reality of an alienated country, was not represented at the festival. Rather, it was relegated to a marginal place — afternoon and midnight showings, and even the category of TV Documentaries — where we found three out of the four films from the "Projet des quatres grands" conceived by Pierre Maheu.

On est loin du soleil, a dramatized re-creation of the personality of Frère André, whose Montreal shrine is already a place of pilgrimage, appeared a year ago. This year **Je chante à cheval avec Willie Lamothe** by Jean-Paul Bernier won the award for Best TV Public Affairs film. The other two films in the "projet," **Peut-être Maurice Richard** and **Duplessis et après,** were classed, strangely enough, as features. While the prime aim of these four films is to examine Quebec life as revealed in four of her popular heroes from the forties and fifties, in all cases they are important documents of Canada, of the role played by religion, hockey and politics in our life. Each film reveals our excessive irrationalism.

Nowhere is the entire Canadian entity more clearly implicated than in **Peut-être Maurice Richard.** His fans might be disappointed, for there are no scenes of Maurice on the ice. Attention has been paid instead to his role as public hero, and we see "The Rocket" with his barber who reminisces over his many tremendous feats on the ice. Jean Duceppe, interviewed about Richard during the filming of **Mon Oncle Antoine,** replies to the questions with a detailed knowledge of Richard's style and exploits, and his eyes shoot off the screen in enthusiasm. Richard's fans were not all French. Hugh MacLennan, speaking in English, describes his fascination with Richard, and at the same time reveals his own point of view as a novelist, interested in the forces of character at play as Richard swept in on the caged goalie. The pan-Canadian effect of the film breaks down slightly when the question of Richard's provocation of the riot in Montreal in the early fifties comes up. With the voice of hindsight, this event is considered to be the first symptom of "La révolution tranquille". Toe Blake suggests that the "Canadiens" saw in the suspension of Richard an attack on their people and stormed to his defence. Clarence Campbell maintains throughout that Richard needed disciplining. That he was a popular hero is amply proven in the film. Perhaps it was at this period that the decline of Canadian hockey in the NHL commenced.

Hockey and religion were the circuses and bread in Quebec while the real battle was political. **Quebec: Duplessis et après** is an interesting study of problems in Quebec elections from Lord Durham to 1970, and proves again that "plus ça change, plus ça reste pareille!" The real losers in this film are the separatist Parti Quebecois, whose bid for power in the provincial election of 1970 is in the foreground. Bernard Landry, one of their financial experts, analyses the difficulties of Quebecois in terms of their position as the proletariat of Canadian and American owned

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companies, a situation which can only worsen to that of a sub-proletariat with increased automation and larger trusts. Flashbacks to *Le petit catéchisme de l'électeur,* published by the Union Nationale in 1936, show that the same argument has already been used by other nationalist movements, who once they have gained power, have only increased the economic alienation.

What is perhaps even more interesting is the study of our electoral mores. A glimpse at this film before the recent federal election might have sobered many voters. At least they would have realized that one of our most deeply held traditions is that of following the strongest personality, the most persuasive orator, which films on Ontario's Hepburn or Mackenzie King might corroborate. A study is made of three typical Quebec ridings. Interviews with the candidates about their social backgrounds, their reasons for entering political life, details of their campaign, from organizational tactics to coffee meetings with middle-aged matrons, soap boxes in the plazas and mass rallies — all such details make the film of sociological interest. But they also enable the viewer to see the best orator emerge as victor. And with the continual flashbacks to Premier Duplessis' speeches, it is hard not to compare the oratory of Robert Burns, victor in Maisonneuve, to that of the Master of Illusion himself.

Like the best of Perrault's films, these examine the emotional forces at play in society. While they display objectivity, and ultimately suggest much to criticize, they also reaffirm the humanity of those who appear on the film, as none of the "dramatic" features did. Quebec audiences found the Duplessis film highly entertaining when it was shown last spring throughout the province: it played for six weeks in the big Comedie Canadienne. What to do with these hybrids was obviously a problem for festival organizers and judges alike. I, for one, would pull them back from limbo and award the prizes for the best actors to those mythical Maurices, Richard and Duplessis.

Barbara Godard

LA VRAIE NATURE DE BERNADETTE

Written and directed by Gilles Carle. Editor, G. Carle. Photography, Rene Verzier. Sound, Henri Blondeau. Music, Pierre F. Brault. Cast: Micheline Lanctôt, Donald Pilon, Reynald Bouchard, Willie Lamothe. Prod., Les Productions Carle-Lamy Ltée. Colour. Panavision. Distributor: France Film. 97 minutes.

Bernadette leaves her husband and moves with her son to a farm where she plans to live close to nature. Soon she has collected round her a "family" of misfits: Rock (who's lame), three old men, an emotionally disturbed child and various animals. To all she willingly gives her love — spiritual, emotional and, for those who desire it, physical.

Her closest neighbour is Thomas who, in contrast to Bernadette, is busy with the practical business of organizing the farmers against the large monopolies and the government. Her other neighbours think she's crazy, and so for a while will most audiences. (At least one woman has complained to me that Bernadette is nothing more than a new manifestation of an old cliché: the scatterbrained female.)

Everybody, of course, takes advantage of Bernadette, and one expects that the film is leading up to an epiphany when Bernadette will see people and the world for what they are: awful.

Well, that is what happens — but not quite. In fact, nothing in **Bernadette** is quite as simple as it first appears. Bernadette, herself, is delightfully innocent and exasperatingly naive. She's hopelessly impractical, but because of her the disturbed child begins to walk and talk for the first time. Rock is at first awkward and (so he tells Bernadette) virginal. Later, we discover that prior to meeting Bernadette he has had an affair with the town whore; but before we can dismiss him as just another con man taking advantage of Bernadette he is killed trying to rescue her from two drifters who are terrorising the "family." (The drifters, themselves, seem at first menacing, then friendly and eventually murderous.)

Both the revelation of Rock's previous affair and his death are handled with brilliant restraint. In the first instance Bernadette (and the audience) merely see a snapshot of Rock and the girl. Nothing is said and neither the photography nor the editing rub it in; the picture is just there. Rock is shot while running from one of the drifters who inexorably follows him. On the soundtrack, while he runs, we hear a fiddle playing requiem-like music. Throughout the scene, even when he is killed, Rock is seen in longshot, a distant figure recognizable mainly because of his limp.

Carle's treatment of his characters is perhaps best exemplified in this death scene. He skillfully milks it for emotions, but doesn't exploit the violence for sensation. Similarly, though Bernadette sleeps with anyone who needs her, the sex is never exploited.

After Rock's death Bernadette herself picks up a gun and begins firing at "pilgrims" who have come to see her — the "saint" who made the disturbed boy walk and talk. We get a close-up of her face as she fires and Carle freezes the frame. A fashionably anarchistic moment — but again not quite. For one thing, Bernadette is not just shooting indiscriminately at the first bunch of people she comes across; the "pilgrims" are attacking Thomas

Joe Medjuck hangs around Innis College at the University of Toronto where it is rumoured that when he's not losing on the pinball machines he teaches a couple of film courses. He is also Associate Editor-Publisher of TAKE ONE, which just goes to show.

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and the demonstrating farmers who are blockading the road. And surprisingly, Carle doesn't end the film on the freeze. The film continues — just a bit. We see Bernadette and Thomas returning to her farm together, and instead of being left with the cynical, self-righteous despair that most contemporary films can't get beyond, we're left with the feeling that maybe, between them, they can find some answers.

And by not quite meeting our first expectations, Gilles Carle has created not just a highly entertaining film, but also a deceptively complex one.

Joe Medjuck

LE TEMPS D'UNE CHASSE

Written and Directed by Francis Mankiewicz. Editor, Werner Nold. Photography, Michel Brault. Sound, Claude Hazanavicius. Music, Pierre F. Brault. Cast: Guy L'Écuyer, Pierre Dufresne, Marcel Sabourin, Oliver L'Écuyer, Monique Mercure. Produced by the National Film Board. 16mm and 35mm. Colour. 92 minutes.

While those out-guessing the judges at the Canadian Film Awards predicted a division of the Etrogs, the choice of Francis Mankiewicz' **Le temps d'une chasse** for three of them was a surprise to many, though the selection of this film for the special jury prize as well as awards for Michel Brault's photography and Claude Hazanavicius' sound recording, was less unexpected than the encouragement given to Mireille Dansereau's **La vie rêvée,** recipient of the award for the best editing and the Wendy Michener prize, since **Le temps d'une chasse** had earlier been shown in the critics' choice at Venice.

The technical strengths praised in each film would suggest they are antithetical: the importance of the photographic image in **Le temps d'une chasse** implies an art of the continuum, of realism, while the primordial role of the editor in **La vie rêvée** defines an art of the fragmentary, a personal lyricism. Although Mankiewicz shapes his material during the shooting and Dansereau afterwards, these films are companion pieces in more than their upset victories and the debuts of their directors, for they probe the dreams of masculine and feminine worlds.

Although the story of a weekend hunt in **Le temps d'une chasse** ends with a death and a deception like so many other Quebec films, psychology, not doctrine, determines the development. The social realities of Montreal — the drabness of the city streets and the female tyranny in the homes — is revealed in the opening scenes, realities which lead three men to escape to the forest in the tradition of the "coureurs de bois." For each one of them, the weekend is a chance to affirm his manhood in the hunt of the regal moose.

Already on leaving Montreal their plans miscarry, for Monique Mercure, as Richard's wife, forces them to take along the boy, Michel. Lionel, the most assured of the men, concentrates on the moose, leaving Willy and Richard to hunt women. Richard manages to assert his independence from his domineering wife, in an idyllic liaison with a tender young waitress. Willy, the oldest of the men, fat and unattractive, is spurned by the waitress he has paid to come to his room. To find a moose becomes an obsession with him.

After a night drinking and loving, the hunters start their last day late. The pressures on them become extreme. Willy, obese, limping, empties bottle after bottle of gin, falling ever farther behind. Even the boy outdistances him, and discovers first tracks, then a moose. A beating is begun: Willy primes his gun, determined to bag his trophy. He fires at a crackling in the bushes and all run up to discover the body of Richard. From the probing sunlight of the impressive opening image, through the flaming beauties of the autumn leaves, to the setting sun haloing the dead body — the idyllic setting contrasts ironically with the futile evasion. Brault's camera searches out its plastic beauties, so much more perfect than bumbling Willy, incarnated by Guy L'Écuyer **(Leopold Z),** and timid Richard, played by Marcel Sabourin **(Il ne faut pas mourir pour ça).** The camera creates the dream world which the characters turn into a nightmare.

Man's own dreams of the absolute domination — this film explores the impossible efforts of man to get beyond reality. There is nothing typically French-Canadian in this film, it goes beyond the local and particular. In its exploration of the northern forest within us all, **Le temps d'une chasse** makes a strong bid as "The Great Canadian Film." If not this time, then next, for Mankiewicz' first film is a most polished debut.

Barbara Godard

LA VIE RÊVÉE

Directed by Mireille Dansereau. Written by Mireille Dansereau and Patrick Auzepy. Producer, Guy Bergeron. Editor, Danielle Gagne. Photography, François Gill. Sound, Jean Rival. Music, Emmanuel Charpentier. Cast: Lilianne Lemaitre-Auger, Veronique LeFlaguais, Jean-François Guité. Colour. Distributor: Faroun Films. 90 minutes.

I had heard of **La Vie Rêvée** long before I saw it, and I expected a raunchy, semi-sexploitation film about adolescent girls' sexual fantasies. I had also heard that the reactions of the male viewers were worth a sociological study. When I finally saw it, I was surprised to see a cinema-conscious movie using a variety of styles (cinema verité, home movies, fantasy, stagey tableaus, arty camera work) to tell a story of a friendship between two women who fantasize a shared relationship with an "ideal man."

There is some female nudity, but it's not exploitative, and it points out the women's easy attitudes towards their bodies: in the locker room at the swimming pool, an older woman hiding around the corner and a child holding a towel in her teeth to dress behind are contrasted with Isabelle and Virginie's casual towelling off. The voyeuristic, voluptuous skin shots are of the man, when he, naked, runs hand in hand with the two clothed women, in a satirical fantasy sequence backed by the theme from **A Man and A Woman,** or when the camera caresses his chest and shoulder in a parody of men's skin movies.

There are lots of jokes and parodies in **La vie rêvée,** zippy little scenes of the women passing men on the street with long swinging strides and tipping their hats with a smile at the beautiful men walking by (among them filmmaker Michael Snow, who was greeted with applause at the Canadian Film Awards screening), and the rollicking Volkswagen ride in the country with the two women friends and a man singing "Le Tourbillon," Jeanne Moreau's song from **Jules et Jim.**

I talked to Mireille Dansereau a week later, and she said that such role-reversal is a first step towards liberation: "I've been studying it sexually, being free like men told us to be free. They told us! We had to become free just to be able to cope with them, in their way of being free. That must be the first revolt, telling them nyah-nyah we can do the same as you. But after that we say, oh yeah we can do the same as you, but it's not that great. Now let's try to create what we are." **La vie rêvée** ends before that second, more difficult, step, so it's an upbeat film of women in their first success. Dansereau: "*That* I wanted to show. I wanted to do just one thing in that film, to create two characters of women who were lively, who were real human beings. I didn't even think in terms of women at that time — I just wanted them to be fun and real, real in a way I hadn't seen, in French Canada at least. I wanted to show that their friendship could take the place of love. Great friendship between women *can* exist, so that for a time at least, you can have so much out of it that you don't need men."

La vie rêvée also shows the double oppression of women in Quebec, when Isabelle is fired from her job at the film company. Her English-Canadian boss tries to tell her gently in his halting French, but he finally gets lazy and says in English that she shouldn't be too upset about it: a pretty young girl doesn't need a career since she can easily find a man who'll take care of her. In her anguish, Isabelle runs to the

Armatage, co-editor of TAKE ONE's women's issue, is presently trying to unload her winnings from a tv quiz show on movies. Anybody interested in a six month supply of Orange Crush? How about 90 days at Vic Tanny's?

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office where Virginie sits endlessly colouring animation cells (a typical "career" for women in films), and then she keeps on running into an open field.

For Isabelle and Virginie, their fantasies are over and, strengthened by their friendship and solidarity, they're ready to tackle real life. The problems of achieving liberation are just beginning but, as Dansereau says, that's another film. For Mireille Dansereau, the completion of the film is a successful political act: she's the first woman to make a feature film in Quebec (and the first to use Super-16), and making this film has established her political identity. Before **La vie rêvée,** she thought of herself as "an international human being." Now she knows she has a country, a sex, and a job; she's Mireille Dansereau, Quebec woman filmmaker — and creator of a competent, witty, energetic, thoughtful, and immensely satisfying movie.

Kay Armatage

JOURNEY

Written, Directed and Produced by Paul Almond. Photography, Jean Boffety with Paul Van der Linden and Al Smith. Cast: Geneviève Bujold, John Vernon, George Sperdakos, Gale Garnett, Luke Gibson. Distributed in Canada by Astral-Gendon.

To counter the puzzled irritation of critics and audiences who won't work at understanding it for themselves, Paul Almond has taken to explaining his latest film, **Journey,** to interviewers *(Cinema Canada* #4; John Hofsess, *Toronto Star,* 16/9/72). Is this a satisfactory state of affairs?

Journey responds well to treatment. Its philosophic and symbolic content has been carefully organized and can be unpacked and laid out in an intelligible scheme. Critics who have found the work "a maddening metaphysical muddle" simply gave up too soon. A mutually disturbing confrontation between opposing orientations to reality holds the film together: the commune, "Undersky," which has committed itself to elemental subsistence, threatens and is threatened by "Saguenay," the girl-from-the-river whose urban sensibility experiences the realities of this basic mode of life as a therapeutic trauma. Each tests the other and is strengthened by the penetration of its opposite.

Moreover, the film is in a fictional mode whose conventions should be well enough known to eliminate confusion about whether it's "real" or "a dream." Innumerable works of literature, whether poems, novels or drama, tell of a wounded or incomplete psyche being drawn into a dreamlike series of emotionally potent experiences which minister to the quest for spiritual wholeness and health. Almond calls **Journey** "a visionary allegory;" "fable" might be a less forbidding term. Saguenay relates how she was taken by Damian (her lover, her daimon?) to a lonely cliff-top in the wilderness, where he wished her to see his "spirits." To escape from an experience which terrified her, she plunged into the river, later to find herself taken up into a communal life of rustic, medieval simplicity. The crisis of her stay here is a frenzied midsummer dance, which reactivates the terror aroused by Damian's "spirits." This time, accompanied by three guides (including Boulder, who has taken particular possession of her at Undersky) she returns to the scene of the original trauma and masters it. She is now ready, though not willing, to be cast off into the river again. Once again she plunges into the water in terror, but as the film ends she is dragging herself ashore at dusk from a stretch of river on which the lights of shipping and dockyards can be seen. Standing above her on the bank is the figure of a man whose silhouette is reminiscent of Boulder.

Is this to say that **Journey** is an unappreciated masterpiece? Not exactly. Rather it is to say that the shortcomings of this rare and beautiful film are not the ones that have been attributed to it.

The main weakness of Almond's film is that it doesn't really work dramatically. He has chosen to unfold its episodes with an elusive indirectness, with the result that for much of the time the spectator is not quite sure what is going on, or what the characters are talking about. (In this respect it has more in common with **Isabel** than with **Act of the Heart.**) Presumably this effect is designed to enhance the "visionary," dreamlike quality of the fable, but it proceeds from a misconception about the medium, which is sufficiently dreamlike already not to need any special artifice. For with even the most conventionally "realistic" films, our apprehension of sights and sounds is much closer to the mode of dream than to the mode of waking perception. Everything is magnified; we are transported abruptly from one situation, one dramatic viewpoint, one moment in time, to another; and the continuity that makes the process intelligible is associative, not literal.

The point is, then, that films which make a deliberate effort to be dreamlike — mysterious, ambiguous, symbolic — often defeat their own ends. We will accept the most bizarre occurrences as real, so long as we are not confused *logically* by the unintelligible. To be truly dreamlike a film should be literally convincing while we are watching it, and mystifying in recollection. **Journey** reverses this order; in retrospect, and by an effort of a rather literary kind of understanding, one can extract a complex and coherent significance from events which are frustratingly puzzling to watch. *Bob Fothergill*

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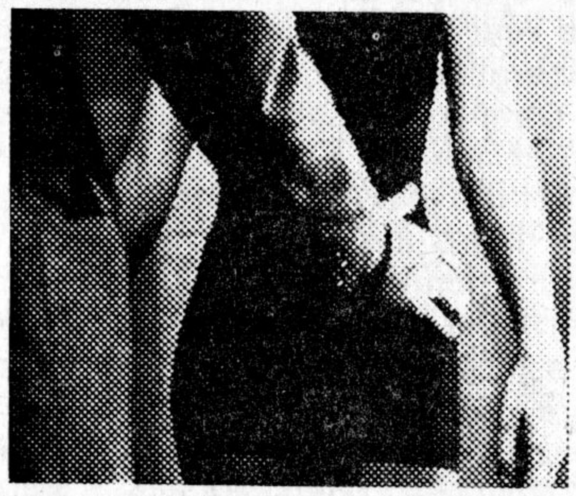

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Rating Guide:

( )	*Beneath Contempt*
(★)	*Contemptible*
(★★)	*Good Rainy Night Flick*
(★★★)	*Excellent*
(★★★★)	*Critics' Choice / Deathless Art*

Deliverance (dir. John Boorman): Complemented by astoundingly beautiful photography, this tough, brawny adventure story doubles as a sophisticated essay on the dangers of the wilderness, the virtues of civilization, and man's ability to survive. An incredible package. (★★★)

The King of Marvin Gardens (dir. Bob Rafelson): Like **Five Easy Pieces,** this is essentially a European film. Concentrating on characters rather than plot, its greatest strength is a fine performance by Bruce Dern as a small-time con artist — a performance that easily overshadows Jack Nicholson's ostensible lead role as a constipated intellectual. The film lacks dramatic dynamics, but offers instead a finely-observed, interesting set of human beings — and the cinematography of Laszlo Kovacs. (★★★)

Lady Sings the Blues (dir. Sidney Furie): Any relation to the life of Billie Holiday is purely coincidental, but on its own terms **Lady** is up there with the best of 'em: a classic musical bio in the Hollywood tradition. Diana Ross is terrific, and her singing is a joy — not an imitation of Lady Day, but an inspired impression. And Richard Pryor (as Piano Man) almost makes up for the absence of Lester Young. It's a fine Hollywood movie: who would have expected it from Sid Furie? (★★★)

Young Winston (dir. Richard Attenborough): Are *all* the British really this wonderful? Can any one man possess the grace and charm that Simon Ward exudes as Winston Churchill? Undoubtedly not, but this unabashedly sympathetic ballad to the great Prime Minister's younger days is so delightfully exuberant and smoothly elegant as to make Tories of us all. (★★★)

Siddhartha (dir. Conrad Rooks): Rooks hasn't done badly by Hesse's novel, but his film is oddly unsatisfying. The Indian landscape is beautifully rendered, the love scenes are poetically pornographic, and Rooks approaches the story with real respect. Nonetheless, he misses the point somehow: the film is episodic, with little sense of Siddhartha's spiritual growth or the exultation of his quest. Furthermore, the music is awful in spots: crashing strings and bad L.A. rock. (★★)

The Valachi Papers (dir. Terence Young): Another chapter in the continued emergence of the gangster noblesse into popular American folklore. Joe Valachi acknowledges his karma and makes a clean breast of things before heading to that part of Valhalla reserved for gentle hit men and benign racketeers. (★★)

Group Marriage (dir. Stephanie Rothman): Awkward in spots, and with a dramatic structure that's slightly out of balance, **Group Marriage** is still a lot of fun. Mrs. Rothman directs with a lively intelligence; if you dig 18th century sex comedies, you'll recognize the form right away. It's been updated (our favorite scene is four people in bed trying to roll a joint), but the basic ingredient is still social satire. (★★)

Melinda: As with virtually all of the current wave of "black" movies, this is yet another tired version of the soul-brother-gets-whitey theme. Fortunately, a superior job of handling conventional production techniques sustains interest above the level of tedium — albeit below any real involvement. (★★)

The Unholy Rollers (dir. Vernon Zimmerman): An unusually interesting (Roller Derby) exploitation film, if only for the vividly expressionistic mode of the settings. Zimmerman is a man to watch. (★★)

Dirty Little Billy (dir. Stan Dragoti): Yet another Billy the Kid movie, this one concentrates on the Kid's early history. Fashionably grungy, it has little to offer beyond a realistic feeling for mud. (★)

Superfly (dir. Gordon Parks Jr.): Like father, like son, and still *another* tired version of... Sadly, this crime adventure in deepest Harlem is raw and unrefined, lacking real substance — unless audiences are now getting off behind close-ups of car hoods. The soundtrack, on the other hand, is thoroughly commendable. (★)

Necromancy (dir. Bert Gordon): We think we read somewhere that director Gordon has disowned this film; if he hasn't, he ought to think about it. A dreadful witchcraft movie, featuring Orson Welles in a new fake nose, and a heroine who goes around asking people, "Don't you realize it's *weird* around here?" Poor Orson. ( )

A Safe Place (dir. Henry Jaglom): A film as confused and scattered as the disturbed young woman with whom it tries to deal. Ineffectual and shallow; schizophrenic pablum. ( )

L.A. LETTER

The film was **Night of the Cobra Woman,** the first Hollywood feature by former New York filmmaker Andrew Meyer. The screening was co-sponsored by the Los Angeles Film Teachers Association and the Count Dracula Society. The print was supplied by Roger Corman's production company, New World Pictures. It took place on a rainy August morning in Los Angeles. Usually it never rains in Los Angeles in August. Strange vibrations were in the air.

The film's title is a concoction of the

Night of the Cobra Woman

Corman organization, and is part and parcel of their regular sexist ad campaign — audience-tested to pack them in at the middle-American drive-in theaters where New World Pictures do 80% of their business. But don't let the ad campaign scare you off. Meyer's original title was **Movini's Venom,** a title more in the spirit of the film, which is more a fantasy than a horror film — sexy, but not sexist.

But if Corman's title brings to mind exotic-erotic fantasies of the 1940s, it would not be inappropriate. Meyer is playing with the old horror mythologies, and has an affection for decor that Maria Montez would not have been uncomfortable in. According to Meyer, his real inspiration was **The Wizard of Oz.**

The squirms (and the audience does squirm) derive from our fear of snakes — a fear that has always seemed disproportionate to the actual danger of these creatures. But perhaps our snakefear is more symbolically, Freudianly, based. It is upon this assumption that Meyer's film plays.

All the sexual implications that usually lurk beneath the surface of the horror genre are here completely out front. The equations involved are between death and orgasm, snakes and sex organs, venom and sperm. But the victims of Movini's venom do not die; they grow old — which is a much more horrible (and apt) prospect to our youth worshipping culture. The cobra woman requires the sperm of handsome young victims to retard an insistent aging process that is expressed in the shedding of a saran wrap sheath of skin. Such is the urbanity of Meyer's sense of humour.

Andrew Meyer developed his fantasy life in New York, where he made several short films and an independent feature, **The Sky Pirate** (1969). These films are often programmed in midnight screenings of underground New York cinema. Meyer can be credited (or blamed) with having discovered actress Joy Bang **(Cisco Pike, Dealing, Play It Again, Sam),** who is undeniably a strange and frustrating screen personality, and who plays a dangerously curious student of snake-lore in **Night of the Cobra Woman.** The director seems to relish a very active participation between his "creation" and a large number of vengeance-minded cobras. Sensuously more interesting is the cobra woman herself, Marlene Clark.

It was on the basis of **The Sky Pirate** that Roger Corman asked Meyer to come up with an idea either for a bike picture or a horror movie, to be shot cheaply in the Philippines. Meyer did some quick research and came up with two indigenous Philippine elements — cobras and mango trees — as the starting points of his treatment. Corman liked the idea and sent Meyer off to make "an erotic horror-fantasy masterpiece."

Considering the constrictions of his budget, and certain handicaps of the Philippine facilities and technical abilities, Meyer was able to realize much of his original vision. The Philippine make-up men were not quite up to the subtleties of convincing aging make-up, so the effect had to be altered more toward base physical deformity; but the cobra woman's strangely evocative lap dissolve transformations merit new respect for this often abused technique. And since Meyer is so fond of having his cobras crawl about the bodies of his actors, we are not so often cheated by cut-aways or other montage effects that make films like **Willard** and **Frogs** such obvious shucks.

The narrative of **Night of the Cobra Woman** is both obsessive and excessive — a wet-dream nightmare of developments, variations and complications. By cramming so much story into 70 minutes of film, Meyer satisfies the requirements of fast-paced drive-in theater entertainment. But, as *Russ* Meyer has so often demonstrated, there is a point where excess becomes punishment — a point at which the viewer craves release from this jungle of human emotions. And just before her final, irreversible transformation into a cobra, Meyer's cobra woman prays for such a release from the unquenchable passions of eternal youth.

If Andrew Meyer's staging and visual choices have a facade of the conventional (compatible with the artless tastes of Corman's audience), one must remember the deceptively unconventional cinema of Edgar Ulmer, with whom Meyer may share an affinity. Both are concerned with the uncomfortable interactions of their characters with the expressionism of their settings. Both are cinemas of obsession.

Meyer's is a world where the battle lines are drawn between a masochistic clinging to illusory worldly values and physical escape from that world. **Night of the Cobra Woman** is a film about the curse of corporeality. Andrew Meyer is strange. *John H. Dorr*

HONG KONG LETTER

A handsome Chinese youth in green and red military uniform pounds at the door of a simple cottage with bloodied hands, and rushes inside looking fiercely determined. Eyes flashing, he moves to center stage, sings a brief aria, extends his now spotless palm upward in a gesture of silence, and quotes the words of Chairman Mao.

An audience of well-dressed young men with dates continue to eat popcorn, embrace in the dark theatre, and even giggle. A Red Chinese movie is showing to a happy, blasé audience in the best theatre of Kowloon, Hong Kong.

Taking the Bandits' Stronghold at Tiger Mountain is as far removed from the lives of the Crown Colony's eight million residents as Tombstone, Arizona is from Fifth Avenue, New York. Subtitled "A Model Peking Opera on a Contemporary Revolutionary Theme," the Cinemascope, color film is well-made, but edited like a stage play. Cantonese subtitles are displayed like a ticker tape on a small screen to the left of the film.

Tiger Mountain is both opera and ballet. A chorus of Chinese cossacks leap (from trampolines behind the props) onto horseback, over rocks, even flying past alien troops camped in the snow. These workers, peasants and soldiers are aristocratic in bearing. Their style is in the tradition of the old Peking Opera — with artistic exaggeration, and handsome costumes often decorated with sable.

If titles such as **On the Docks, Raid on the White Tiger Regiment, Women's Red Detachment** (seen in the United States on television) aren't as provocative as **The Dragon Flirts with the Phoenix,** the contemporary operas are lively, adventurous and witty in their folk art. The young revolutionary maiden is always beautiful, but she may have a father who bungles everything.

Model Peking Opera on film is intended to instruct, but right down the street in any East Asian country boisterous entertainment can be found — the sword epics. The hero of those movies is dressed usually in white, has his hair done in a sort of ponytail, and carries a sword at a jaunty angle. The film begins as he strolls down a well-worn path. Suddenly, from the brush, appear no fewer than 12 well-armed thugs, dressed identically in black. After two lines of inconsequential dialogue they spring at the young man. He leaps 15 or 20 feet straight up into the air, poises himself on a twig of a tree, and tries to reason with his assailants. Then he leaps upon them (since they won't listen to him), and amidst much blood and violence he carves them all up with his sword.

WANT TO BOOK A FILM?

Turn to page 28 for a new listing of sources for 16mm prints of films mentioned in this issue of TAKE ONE.

"Swordplays," as they used to be called, or "historical dramas", are the very backbone of the Chinese film industry outside People's China. Every week, in Hong Kong alone, more than half a million people attend a swordplay movie to see good triumph over evil, and about 150 bad guys get the chop.

The sword has retained its place in Chinese mythology, and is respected as the weapon of self-defense and chivalry. The sword in legendary plots is usually invincible, unbreakable and sometimes even hypnotic... an opponent is usually immobilized when faced with the hero and his "soul-seizure" sword that can stop anything smaller than a medium tank.

To make the scene perfectly vivid, the historical screen swordsman has a weapon about four feet long and three inches across the blade. Fortunately for the actors, the swords used are made of wood and painted silver. But still, the blood must flow — as these epics are the most violent in the world. The Chinese are prudish and modest about sex, so you don't see any on the screen, but violence is an entirely different matter. Fake blood, supplied by a Japanese company, is imported to the Chinese film studios in Hong Kong and Taiwan in 45-gallon drums. The actors often apply the stuff with a paint brush.

The movie moguls who oversee this mayhem are Run Run Shaw and his modestly self-effacing brother Runme Shaw. They got their start in Shanghai pictures back in 1923. Later, they set up shop in Singapore and Hong Kong, presiding over an empire of 100 theatres. It became a matter of turning out enough films to keep the theatres filled.

Run Run Shaw wastes little time on ideological considerations — but makes about 40 films a year which gross more than $50 million dollars. He is a polite, powerful and shrewd man in his mid-sixties, who never comes West for a Hollywood Oscar but produces more films at his studios than any other film company in the world. The center of his activity is Shaws' Movie Town, a sprawling, bizarre, half-real world of scenery and frenzied activity above Clearwater Bay in Kowloon, Hong Kong's New Territories. Six or seven films can be made at one time, and often the same actor appears in three or four.

Young Asian actors and actresses are constantly in training at the studio. They receive very small salaries, and must live in dormitories while they work back-breaking schedules. Several years ago, Peter Chen was Shaw's highest paid star. He received $5,000 per picture, and made four a year. Starlets are delighted to sign up for a seven-year, $100-a-month contract

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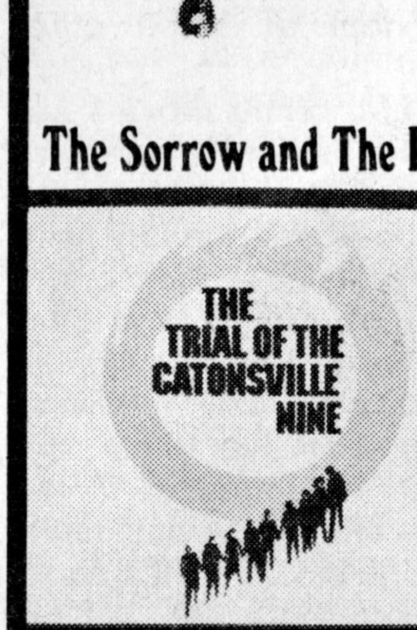

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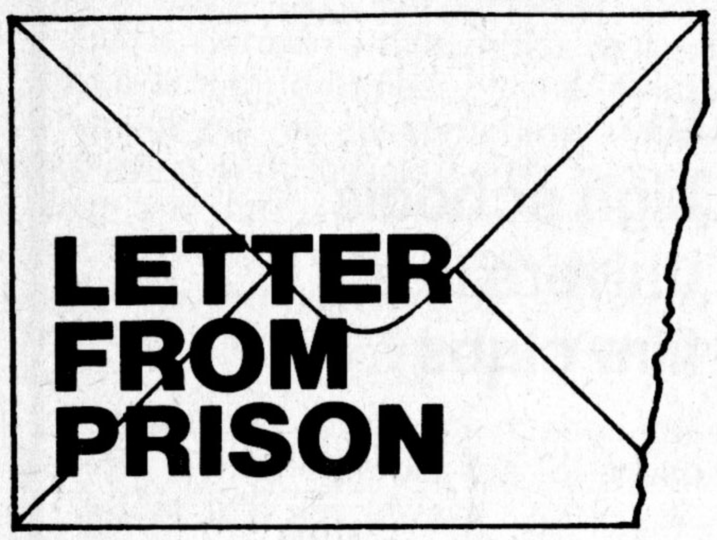
"It is practically impossible to lose money making slash epics" Shaw concedes. It may sound pretty monotonous, but one thing that no Chinese moviemaker wants is a plot that is *too* different. Everything has got to come out as it always has, and the good guys must always win!

Charlotte Cardon



Frank Elli wrote his book, *The Riot,* while serving time in the Minnesota State Prison at Stillwater, Minnesota. The volume was selected by at least one major book club and later provided a starring vehicle for former quarterback Jim Brown. When the book was reviewed in the *Saturday Review,* instead of lauding it for its realism, the critic pointed out that many of the book's characters seemed to have been copied from old movies.

Of course they were!

But *not* by Frank Elli. He simply looked around him and recorded what he saw.

Depression-era bank robber John Dillinger vaulted tellers' cages in imitation of Douglas Fairbanks, Sr., and many lesser-known criminals have patterned their behavior after screen personalities, too. Prisons abound with men who learned how they are *supposed* to act from watching movies. Long before the song cautioned "Don't bogart that joint," prison slang used "bogart" as a verb meaning "to intimidate."

That tells a lot.

That damned nearly tells it all.

The old crime movies were accepted as essentially true — not in the sense of a documentary, but in the actions and attitudes portrayed. That's why these films set the standard for succeeding efforts; and that's why, even today, you can see men in prison hitching up their trousers in unconscious imitation of James Cagney, or mimicking Humphrey Bogart's tight-lipped speech. Where convicts are allowed to have coins, there are sure to be men standing around coolly flipping them in the air *à la* George Raft.

Surprisingly, it is the younger convicts, not the old-timers, who are most likely to be playing movie-like roles. Though they may have picked up their mannerisms at third- or fourth-hand, the younger men are the ones who play the roles the hardest. After a man has been in prison a few years he discovers that neither the so-called Convict Code, nor the "rules" the law is supposed to follow, exist. The movies lied.

Prison movies usually show strong, essentially good men enduring harsh conditions and rising above them. The convicts form an almost united front (there is always *one* informer) against the sub-human guards, and often protect and sympathize with the innocent men among them.

Merde!

At the top of the prison pecking order are the bank robbers and big-time con men; at the bottom are the sexual deviates and men serving time for morals offenses. Though prisoners most certainly claim innocence when talking to outsiders and officials, they *never* do it among themselves. In fact, it's not uncommon for a car thief or check passer to claim he's a bank robber in an effort to gain status. A man who claimed he was innocent would have no standing at all.

The Convict Code is a myth. There is normally so little unity among prisoners, and informers are so plentiful, that it's a near-miracle something like the Attica prison rebellion ever got started, or that escapes occur at all.

Even when an escape plot can be kept secret, who takes part? Most escapees are short-term trusties who walk away from honor farms. After his first year or so in prison, a man is usually so institutionalized that insane conditions seem normal. Until recently, you could tear down the walls of most prisons, or land a helicopter in the middle of the exercise yards, and it would be doubtful whether one man in a hundred would leave. It's only the new breed of "political" prisoner who has anything resembling unity or single-mindedness.

The view of prisons as universities of crime is false, too. Prisons are populated by failures. A successful criminal does not go to prison; only failures find their way inside the walls. The most an unsuccessful car thief or check passer can hope to learn is how to be equally inept at some other criminal activity.

The more general crime movies are every bit as false as the prison pictures. It doesn't matter whether the audience is supposed to identify with the police or the criminal — most crime films are as far from reality as a lunatic's dream. The early crime movies set a pattern that is often still followed. They were highly effective films. The acting and drama (melodrama, if you will) transcended the numerous technical and artistic flaws. Like **Billy Jack,** they combined just the right mixture of half-baked philosophy (often merely implied) and violent action to appeal to unsophisticated audiences. The films' gross defects went unnoticed, their implausibility and impossibility went unchallenged. Well-executed films like the classic **Gun Crazy** and the more recent **Bonnie and Clyde** both followed a formula established long before either of them was shot.

Occasionally, a crime film will have a technical advisor, but this doesn't insure accuracy of detail or anything else. Safe crackers continue to be shown pressing their ears to vault doors to hear the tumblers drop; burglars still jam soft wax into locks and remove perfect models of keys; killers still screw silencers onto revolvers. The advisors, perhaps not wanting to teach the children how to burn the village down, never bother to explain that safe tumblers are notched discs which are turned to line up the openings — they don't drop anywhere; stuffing wax into a lock will only plug it up; and revolvers cannot be silenced effectively — automatic pistols, yes, but not revolvers.

Of course, technical advisors on crime movies are seldom meant to give technical advice. Reality isn't their concern. Their chief interest is the public image of some law enforcement agency or other cooperating pressure group. Their concern isn't with truth, but that the illusion presented is the approved one.

It's too bad crime movies began the way they did and that they have evolved the way they have. It didn't have to be this way. The movies didn't have to lie. Truth actually *is* stranger than fiction; it can be every bit as entertaining. And when it comes to educating and enlightening, there can be no substitute for truth.

It's not too late to blaze new trails. No conventions are ever so firmly established that they can't be altered. It's possible that some filmmaker will approach crime or prison, throwing away all preconceptions. It's possible that the movies will stop lying.

But don't count on it.

Albert F. Nussbaum

Albert Nussbaum, 38 years old and formerly one of the FBI's Ten Most Wanted men, is presently serving a 40-year stretch at the US penitentiary at Marion, Illinois for multiple bank robberies. He writes for a wide range of periodicals, including Alfred Hitchcock's Mystery Magazine *and* The American Scholar.

WOMEN IN FILM

Women filmmakers aren't sitting around waiting for Hollywood to open the studio gates and a lot of women don't care if it never does. "I think it's correct to say that Hollywood is dead," said Marta Vivas, and even if it's still got a few breaths left she'd rather stay in New

York and be a third of Herstory Films. "I don't think Paramount would be interested in us so I'm not going to dream about it. I would not aspire to something that is not a reality."

Women's production companies and distribution agencies *are* a reality, and like everything else women are doing, they are getting more visible all the time. Patricia Bertozzi, another third of Herstory, worked for a male company as a script girl recently. "They wouldn't let me near any of the equipment. They said it's nice you're making your own little movies, but when it gets down to it you can't carry the equipment." Nice try, fellas, but Pat, Marta, and Marion Hunter have been carrying equipment to all sorts of demonstrations, baseball games and other women's events for their new film, **Women for Women**...and they've been meeting a lot of male newspeople along the way.

If men were put on the Shirley Chisholm campaign, it was an insult. If men were covering an abortion demonstration, none of them knew the speakers *or* the issues. "And we did," Marta said. "Their hostility comes through on the evening news." Working alongside women with cameras didn't make the men's job any more pleasant. They'd say, "Oooh, look at that! Look at those girls! Those girls have cameras!" Pat mentioned that, "We'd get preferential treatment — women would talk to us and not to them; they're much more comfortable talking to us — and it made the men furious." And Hunter reported that, "We used their lights and they'd turn them off. They'd even purposely talk near our microphones." The encounters sound like an ordeal for everybody concerned, but the women got their footage, and their presence at least was not ignored.

Herstory has existed since April, 1972. The first time the members worked together was on Hunter's film, **Roll Over,** which shows women in traditional and atypical occupations, ending with actresses portraying the unlimited opportunities of the future. Since then they've worked on two films as a non-hierarchical collective, a method they've found neither difficult nor oppressive. "We've all been though consciousness raising," said Marta, "and certain experiences that have allowed us to come to this point. I'm perfectly willing to relinquish things. It's something we all came prepared for. We weren't saying just because we worked on men's companies we can trust each other. There was a little bit of screaming and soul-searching — though we haven't got time to fight with each other. We needed each other because we weren't willing to go back to work..." There was going to be another end to that sentence, but Marta, laughing, decided not to go on.

"The movies couldn't be made by one of us," stressed Hunter. "Our ideas ricochet off each other," said Pat. Nobody has any specific function. One person shoots one magazine, somebody else the next. Somebody edits a while, then another woman takes over. Everything is talked over so carefully that nobody's disturbed by the results. Maybe one reason it works is, as Pat explained, "The film never starts out as one person's baby. No one of us has the incredible stake you have in it when it's your own movie."

The women of Herstory have not been treated well by the male establishment. (Even in high school, Pat was treated with less than professional, or even amateur, respect: "I was the only girl they let in the camera club, because my mother made a big stink about it. Junior year they made a rule that girls were not allowed in the darkroom — I was the only girl — because something might happen to them in there. I stuck it out anyway"). They expected it from men. But in the perennial search for backing, Marta expressed shock that "Women are not willing to support other women. We've gone to women in the movement and to private investors, and we've found that women in the movement have not yet learned to contribute to their own propaganda. They're complaining about the male media — we're not the only women around making films — but they don't support their own media." A Herstory feature still in the planning stages is being backed by a man who isn't a feminist, because "It's easier to get money from capitalists than from women."

Hunter: "I think one reason women resist investing in film is it alienates women. It's so technical, and women look so bad in the movies and the women's movement looks so bad on television." Herstory of course, is trying to combat the stereotypes with films like **Roll Over, Women for Women,** and **The Feminist Party Street Walks,** a five minute musical comedy (on demonstrations) commissioned by the Feminist Party. Besides making their own films, the group is a complete production house. They hire out as film crew, and can handle any aspect of film production for other companies.

Their toughest problem right now is getting sync equipment. "I've spent so much time scrounging equipment this year..." sighed Pat. Renting isn't a comfortable solution because they have to put up so much money for insurance. But they wouldn't trade their problems for working for somebody else. With their own company, the product is really theirs. And, for Marta, "It's a life and death matter. Unless we want to be an editor or a top script girl."

Sondra Lowell

Sondra Lowell is a freelance writer and critic based in Los Angeles.

REFLECTIONS ON THE CURRENT SCENE

by Herman G. Weinberg

It is sad to see even Hitchcock succumbing to the squalid imperatives of the times and pretending, in **Frenzy** (even the title is a come on), that his "objective" sexual explicitness is anything other than titillation for his audiences. But even in this dubious respect, the "dramaturgy" that necessitates this is questionable, since most of the nudes he depicts are corpses, a not particularly edifying sight. And an embarrassing rape scene all but effaces the roseate memory of the artist who charmed us with **The 39 Steps,** some 38 years ago. Not the slightest play of mind is called upon *(everything* is explicit, so that the most backward member of any audience will get it) and so the most ingenious twistings and turnings of the plot remain only that, and when the film is over one's interest in it is over, and the idea of ever wanting to see it a second time is unthinkable. There is nothing of what Sternberg used to call *Nachklange* — afterglow. There is no wit, no charm, no poetry — qualities that **The 39 Steps** had in abundance. But the saddest fact of all is that for a director of Hitchcock's expertise to work at all in these benighted times is to have to pander to the times. You couldn't make a picture like **The 39 Steps** today. Wit, charm and poetry as requisites for a motion picture? How obsolete it sounds. In a world that the barbarians seem to have taken over, such qualities are, indeed, obsolete.

There is no bait in the title or content of **Under Milk Wood,** a valiant attempt by Andrew Sinclair to put Dylan Thomas' play about a day in his Welsh homeland on the screen. Sinclair has a nice feel for the land, the people and the speech, and it would have been interesting to see what he would have done with a film transcription of **Ulysses.** Of course, it can't be done (the Strick version was a joke, and after scarcely six years is already forgotten) but it would have been interesting to see what Sinclair would have done with it. I hope you will understand that I mean this as a compliment to **Under Milk Wood.**

After the numbing virtuosity of **Pas de Deux,** anything else by Norman McLaren that followed it would have to be anti-climactic. **Adagio** is also a *pas de deux,* but simply told, without

Herman G. Weinberg has contributed articles to most of the world's leading film journals, judged at various film festivals, been US correspondent for Sight & Sound *and* Cahiers du Cinema, *and published several books (of which* The Complete Greed *is the latest).*

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any "effects," and accompanied by a seraphic slow movement by Albinioni to which it appears to have been choreographed (being photographed entirely in slow motion). It is a blessed moment of quietude in a noisy world.

Frank Manchel continues his excellent series of film books for young students with *Cameras West* (Prentice-Hall, $4.25), a history of the Western from **The Great Train Robbery** to **Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid.** The real West is contrasted with the movie West, fact and fancy interplay, and the mythic West turns out in the end to have a greater validity than the real one. "Art is a lie," said Picasso, "that helps us to see the truth." That applies even here. Copiously and very cogently illustrated, too.

Another recommended book for young film students is Larry Kardish's *Reel Plastic Magic,* subtitled "A History of Films and Filmmaking in America" (Little, Brown & Co., $7.50 — McClelland & Stewart in Canada). This begins with the movies' pre-history and takes it right up to **2001: A Space Odyssey** and **Bonnie & Clyde** with an epilogue on the experimental and so-called "underground" experimental film. That's a lot of ground to cover in a small and highly condensed work, but the author covers it and does justice to his material. Again, copiously illustrated and to the point.

Published this month is a new film book by Jay Leyda, which is always an event. *Dianying* is its cryptic title, Massachusetts Institute of Technology is the publisher, and I'll report on it in this column soon.

OLDIES BUT GOODIES

The makers of **Cabaret** were confronted with archetypal problems: 1) a problem of cinematic form: how much, and in what ways, should a stage property of limited mobility be opened up for the movies? 2) a genre problem: how long of face and deep of theme can a musical be? If you're going to be sober and high-class, how do you integrate your songs into the action naturally, so as not to arouse laughter or slip gears? 3) a literary problem: since you're dealing with a vast subject — the *zeitgeist* of pre-war Germany, no less — how do you make your characters credible individuals and yet at the same time provide them with enough stature to make them embody the spirit of their age?

In their solution to these hurdles, Director Bob Fosse and associates were clearly earnest and hard-working, but they bungled it, they really bungled it. In its sublimely wrong choices, in fact, **Cabaret** is a vigorous and thorough demonstration of how not to do it. In response to problem no. 1, they decided to open up the works, and "liberate" the story as often as possible from the symbolically dark and decadent and claustrophobic cabaret. The heart of the story is *in* that cabaret, however; the characters' lives ought properly to be centered there.

Not only does the film nervously and obsessively cut away from the cabaret, it cuts away to the wrong things. **Cabaret** should look like a George Grosz caricature; it should be, that is, a grotesque cartoon populated with twisted, leering faces, a hallucinatory satire, a sybaritic carnival. Except for the wickedly sly performance of Joel Grey as the Master of Ceremonies, and for isolated moments in the musical numbers, the film mostly looks like a delicate French Impressionist painting: wispy sunlight, blue skies, picnics in wide open fields, elegant town houses and palatial country estates. All the pretty pictures blunt the satire, turn the film into a conventional bitter-sweet romance.

Never satisfied to let the cabaret speak for itself, the film is flooded with inserts which link the world within the cabaret to the world without. Musical numbers are splintered by these sledge-hammer cross-references. We are continually being poked and nudged: get it? get it? Both academic and intellectually crude, the associational editing gives **Cabaret** the look of a film school exercise.

For problem no. 2 — the integration of the music — the filmmakers wisely (except for one slip) confine the songs to the cabaret. The music, which comments pertinently on "outside" society, is both thematic framework and thematic center: **Cabaret** is seen *through* its songs, and it's too bad that the impact of the music is coarsened by the needlessly explicit intercutting. The well-staged numbers are disfigured by the film's misguided obeisance to cinematic fluidity.

Naive conceptions of film form aside, **Cabaret**'s real shortcoming is in problem no. 3: the characters are just not full enough to bear the thematic weight thrust upon them. (See Chekhov for the successful fusion of large social and historical forces with naturalistic surface and humanized characterizations.) A rich Jewess here, an effete Baron there, a confused American singer, an inhibited English language student — the film's cardboard types supply a copy-book overview of the population of pre-war Germany. The characters seem included merely for their aptness as types, and the film never mixes the types convincingly. I never believed, for instance, that Sally Bowles would know such a rich, handsome Baron, and why should he be interested in her anyway? (Liza Minnelli's a screen natural, but she's awfully pokey in the part - I don't see Sally as quite such a wide-eyed girl from the country.) And why is there so much space devoted to that tiresome comic opera fortune-hunter and that drippy heiress?

It's in its attitude toward the Baron that the film flounders most. He's bisexual, and the film tries to connect his type — the decadent aristocrat — with the rise of Hitler. Now that's not only provincial, it's downright pernicious. The way **Cabaret** tries to relate personal morality to social corruption is foolish as well as ambivalent. The film is attracted by the sexual freedom it depicts, and yet it feels compelled to cluck its tongue. It treats its **Sunday Bloody Sunday** triangle gingerly, standoffishly, with respectful awe for the characters' youth and charm — and yet it insinuates that the characters' liberated morality is in some way tied to Hitler.

The real truth of the matter is that these three nice people have nothing whatever to do with the rise of Nazism — they are neither symptom nor cause, because the film fails to make them comment meaningfully *on,* or move naturally *within,* their society. And if their Baron is supposed to represent a diseased society, the filmmakers miscalculated; Helmut Griem offers such a charming performance that the alleged promiscuity of his character seems entirely natural and reasonable as a way of life.

I don't want to be too solemn about this, but in the face of its subject — one of the most horrible events in human history — the kooky humors, sexual dalliances and prettified landscapes of **Cabaret** are an impertinence.

Foster Hirsch

Foster Hirsch has written on film, theatre, and books for a number of publications, including Film Quarterly, Cinema, The New York Times, Crawdaddy *and* Fusion.

The American gangster, at least on film, is not nearly as afraid of dying as of being "a sucker," if one is to believe the evidence of 59 gangster films

HR&W

TALLULAH

The unique amalgam that was Tallulah Bankhead — well-brought up daughter of an old Southern family, legendary lover of both sexes, electrifying star, grand-stander par excellence — is captured in Brendan Gill's TALLULAH, a stunning tribute to a singular woman, that combines a biographical study of the actress with brief sketches of her famous friends, and hundreds of photographs, many never before published.

The 9 x 12 inch, $28.75 book, designed by Marvin Israel, contains over 300 photographs and sketches of personalities such as Katharine Hepburn, Robert Benchley, John Hay Whitney, and Marlene Dietrich which complement perfectly Mr. Gill's character study of Tallulah.

There was a public image of Tallulah that she, in part, created — an image of excesses which Mr. Gill puts in perspective in TALLULAH. He writes: "She respected and disliked the theater and gave up her life to it, but the common view, which she encouraged, was that she was somehow an undisciplined outsider, a gifted amateur, who drank too much and talked too much, and turned cartwheels on stage for want of something more professional to do. The facts were otherwise..."

Tallulah's greatest stage triumphs were as Regina Giddens in Lillian Hellman's "The Little Foxes" and as Sabrina in Thornton Wilder's "The Skin of Our Teeth." She received the New York Screen Critics Award as Best Actress in Alfred Hitchcock's "Lifeboat," and her highly successful radio program, "The Big Show," was aired for more than two years.

With Brenda Gill's TALLULAH, Miss Bankhead is once again center stage.

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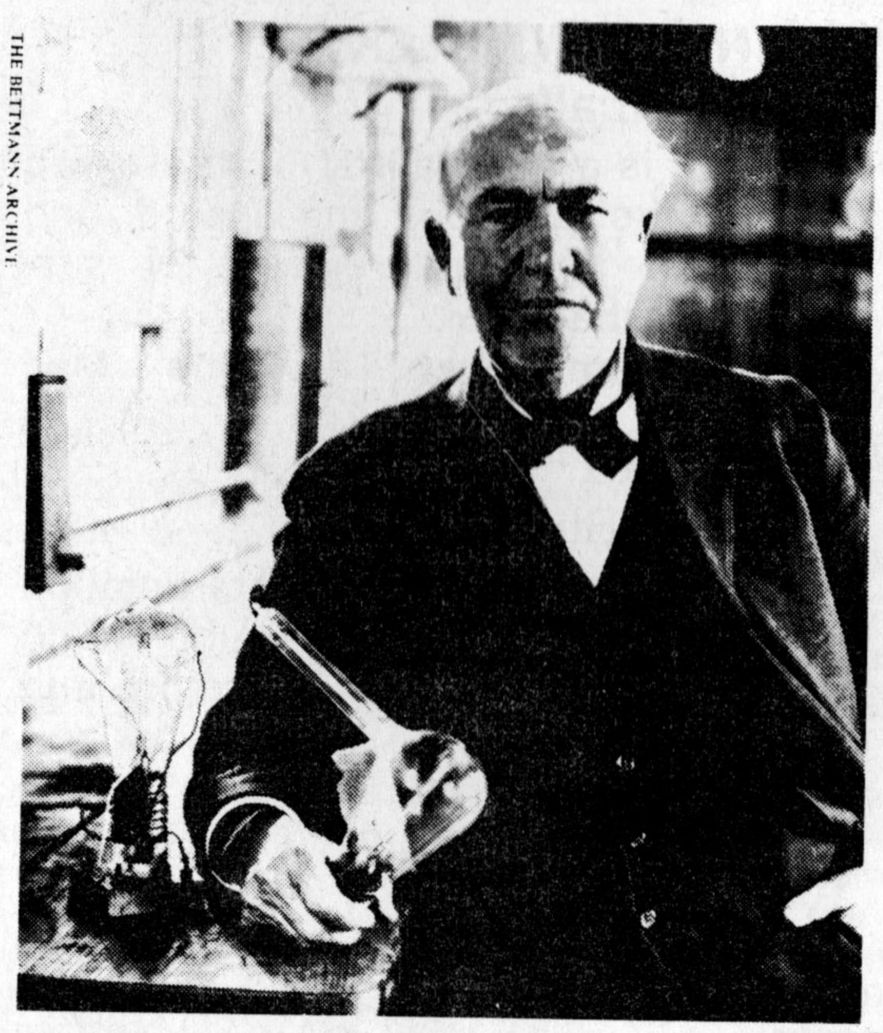

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from D.W. Griffith's **Musketeers of Pig Alley** (1912) through Arthur Penn's **Bonnie and Clyde** (1967). The films were shown as part of a three-week program, "The Gangster on Film: An Examination of Popular Urban Genres" this past summer at The University of Illinois, Chicago.

A number of myths about gangster film were questioned at the program — given in conjunction with the American Film Institute, and supported by the National Endowment for the Arts.

Joseph H. Lewis, a small, energetic, sun-tanned man in his early 70s emphasized that his **Gun Crazy** (1950) was not based on the story of Bonnie Parker and Clyde Barrow or on any other movie. Lewis, who also directed such films as **The Big Combo** (1955) and **Undercover Man** (1949), told the 40 film teachers, writers and hangers-on at the program that **Gun Crazy** has had almost no commercial distribution and was given only slight distribution when it was first released.

Daniel Mainwaring, a white-haired, pleasantly feisty man who scripted such films as **Baby Face Nelson, Invasion of the Body Snatchers, The Phoenix City Story** and **Out of the Past,** said that ascribing thematic consistency to Hollywood directors is often carried to extremes. A look at four Mainwaring films in a row, **The Lawless** directed by Joseph Losey, **Out of the Past** directed by Jacques Tourneur, **The Phoenix City Story** directed by Phil Karlson and an excerpt from **Baby Face Nelson** directed by Don Siegel did show strong, distinct thematic similarities, and even recurrent dialogue and character development.

The hard look at more than four dozen films about gangsters made it clear that there is more than one tradition in gangster films — as opposed to the simplistic position taken by Robert Warshaw's essay in *The Immediate Experience.* Warshaw's genre definition is based only on the pure, modern gangster film which existed from 1930 to 1933 in **Little Caesar, The Public Enemy** and **Scarface,** and their lesser contemporaries, most notably George Hill's **The Secret Six** (1931). Two gangster films shown during the program, — little seen even at film societies — proved to be more complex and advanced than the Warner Brothers trio in their own time. The films, both directed and written by Rowland Brown, were **Quick Millions** (1931) and **Blood Money** (1933).

Other films seen during the program showed a clear move in the later 30s to New Deal optimism — often coupled with a quiet anti-capitalism and a backing away from the gangster as a tragic figure. William Keighley's **Bullets or Ballots** and Lloyd Bacon's **Marked Woman** are prime examples. Walsh's **High Sierra** in 1940 ushered in the psychologically-driven bandit gangster who, in the 60s, was overtaken by the gangster used for mythic statement — Roger Corman's **St. Valentine's Day Massacre** and **Bonnie and Clyde** are prime examples.

Techniques used to get into the films included an analysis of **Bonnie and Clyde** with an almost single frame slow-down of the killing of Bonnie and Clyde to examine Penn's style; the showing of all three film versions of **The Maltese Falcon:** Huston's 1941 version, the Roy Del Ruth 1931 version with almost the same dialogue and a radically different result, and William Dieterle's 1936 attempt to turn the story into a screwball comedy as **Satan Met a Lady;** the showing, right in a row, of the Romeo and Juliet/doomed lover quartet of Fritz Lang's 1937 **You Only Live Once,** Nicholas Ray's 1947 **They Live By Night,** Lewis' 1950 **Gun Crazy** and **Bonnie and Clyde.**

The program also turned up a number of relatively unknown and unseen films which proved to be worth much more attention, including (in addition to the Rowland Brown films) **Out of the Past, Marked Woman** (1937), Raoul Walsh's very funny **Baby Face Harrington** (1935) with Charlie Butterworth, Fritz Lang's **You and Me** (1938) with music by Kurt Weill and some dialogue by Brecht; and **The Phoenix City Story.**

The program was presented by Gerald Temaner, University of Illinois; John Cawelti, University of Chicago; and Stuart Kaminsky, Northwestern University. In addition to the straight gangster film, the program included sessions on related genres including the big caper, the cop film, hard-boiled detective films and Western gangsters.

There is a good chance that the AFI will be publishing a book based on interviews and talks during the program.

Stuart M. Kaminsky

Stuart Kaminsky is a regular TAKE ONE contributor, teaches at Northwestern University, and has written five novels, five detective stories, a screenplay, and an as-yet unpublished book on Don Siegel.

BOOKS

The Way We Were, by Arthur Laurents. Harper & Row, New York City. 264 pps. $6.95.

You may or may not want to watch for a forthcoming Barbra Streisand film called **The Way We Were**. It was first written in the form of a novel by playwright Arthur Laurents *(Home of the Brave, Time of the Cuckoo* and *West Side Story).* Or perhaps he wrote the screenplay first.

The film reviewer of the *San Francisco Examiner* wondered out loud (April 16) whether "this country is now relaxed enough about subject matter once considered subversive to accept Barbra in the role of a young Communist — a leaflet carrying campus militant who's the eventual victim of her commitment to causes like The Hollywood Ten."

The reviewer said Barbra will play a "fun-loving Marxist," a "New York Jewish kook named Katie Morosky —" and he has a hunch Laurents wrote it for Miss Streisand. Laurents practically admitted it in an interview in *Women's Wear Daily* (April 20), and he also said he had given Barbra her first job on Broadway, "when I directed *I Can Get It for You Wholesale."*

For this fact we should be everlastingly grateful, for Streisand is one of the most dazzling all-around theatrical talents of our time. Whether we will be grateful to Laurents for the film version of his novel remains to be seen.

Apprised of the *Examiner* man's piece about his book and forthcoming film, Laurents, interviewed by the *San Francisco Chronicle*'s Genevieve Stuttaford (May 7) said, "I think it's death if she (Barbra) plays Katie as a kook. Katie cares desperately, and she is terribly vulnerable. Her tragedy is that she falls in love with the wrong person. It happens all the time..."

This comment is passing strange because in the novel Katie Morosky *is* a kook. She is also the archetype of the right-wing caricature of a female member of the Young Communist League — or the Communist Party. She is plain; she is Jewish; she has kinky hair which she goes to Harlem to have straightened! She is almost totally humorless — when she is not giving out with smartass wisecracks (which Barbra will handle brilliantly). She screams, *"Fascist!"* at people who disagree with her. She is the butt of her classmates at college precisely *because* she cares desperately and humorlessly about her "causes", and when she addresses 3,000 students at a peace rally, a picket-line forms behind her displaying this message on placards, letter by letter: ANY PEACE BUT KATIE'S PIECE!

Even the handsome "golden" WASP jock she yearns for, and with whom she cannot get to first base, laughs at her. His name is Hubbell Gardiner, and she runs into him again years later when she is (quite incredibly, considering her open YCL and CP record) working for the OWI during World War II. This time he is a Navy Lieutenant, an authentic wounded hero of the PTO, and is stoned to the eyeballs on a barstool. Katie maneuvers him home with her, goes to the bathroom to slip into something more comfortable. and returns to find him passed out stark-naked on her bed.

Comes the Dawn, and Gardiner wakes with an erection and rolls over onto Katie. She spends a considerable time in anguish after this, wondering whether he will remember that he laid her.

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He remembers; a liaison is formed with Katie hopping to Washington, D.C., where he is stationed, and Hubbell coming to New York, but finally he tells her there is no future in their relationship. She knows exactly why and puts her finger on it: she is not his "style" of girl. True. She should have stood in bed, but she pursues him with tears and lust and lo! he weakens. (Why?) They marry (why?), he sells a novel to Hollywood and they are off to Lotusland. But they do not walk into the sunset hand in hand. How could they?

Katie works as a reader while Hubbell rises rapidly in the film hierarchy. Her radicalism gradually evaporates, and finally he tells her to lay off her "revolutionary" insults to "the man I work for." He also orders her to "lay out" when the atmosphere begins to change, HUAC agents are in the bushes, subpoenas are being handed out, and Katie starts to get involved in a new cause: the case of The Hollywood Ten which has risen over the hills like "Comes the (Red) Dawn."

Hubbell has also told Katie that she takes herself, and the world, too seriously. *He* doesn't even take *himself* seriously. He knows her heart is in the right (left) place and he "respects" her for that, but he is wise in the ways of the world — he knows that all political activity is futile, and he is certainly not going to let his little Red Riding-kook of a wife jeopardize his posh living.

That is how Katie learns there *is* something he takes seriously: money. Ah, yes. By this time she is enormous with child, and while he gallantly offers to stand by until she delivers, he advises her to run for her life which she shortly does. That is, she runs back to New York while her WASP jock becomes a SHIT (albeit charming) who reverts to his WASP girls, all of whom wear beige, come easily to him (as "all girls do"), and presumably take neither him nor themselves particularly seriously.

You get the picture. "Nobody's ever dared to make such a movie," the *Examiner* reviewer said breathlessly, and wondered how the public will accept "Barbra's Daring Role."

Laurents agreed, in part, with his SHIT hero when he told Miss Stuttaford, "'To accept the futility of action is not a good reason not to act,' he said softly. 'If you're not careful you begin to lose your passion.'" This is a rather quaint statement. In fact ***The Way We Were*** is a rather quaint novel when it is not merely light-weight, a cop-out and faintly anti-semitic in the bargain — for what passion is Laurents talking about? The physical passion of Katie Morosky for her WASP-SHIT husband? Her political passion which, believe it or not, was a very important aspect of the period Laurents is "dealing" with? At the end, she is handing out leaflets again ("Ban the Bomb Now!"), and is safely remarried to "the only David X. Cohen" in the telephone book.

"What's the X for?" Hubbell asks and gets no answer. The X marks the spot where Laurents lost any desire to act on his leftwing convictions which, he told both *Women's Wear Daily* and the *Chronicle,* got him blacklisted, too. Why, he and his attorney had to fight the State Department for five months to get it to issue him a passport! (Paul Robeson and the late Rockwell Kent had to spend *years* fighting, but maybe Frances Knight, the Jabberwock in charge of passports, thought they were more subversive than Laurents.)

Laurents need not worry about the acceptance of the film version of his novel. His heroine will not upset the red-haters because she may be a "Communist", but obviously she doesn't know her ass from a hot rock. His hero (albeit a turd) is *so* handsome and charming (Ryan O'Neal again?) that audiences will heartily agree when he says political action is totally futile. And although the case of The Hollywood Ten was a landmark attempt to stop HUAC cold on Constitutional grounds — which the Supreme Court neatly side-stepped by refusing *certiorari* — it does not figure in the story in any way that could possibly disturb those who originally blacklisted The Ten.

We will have to wait with bated breath to see how Barbra will look naked because Hubbell stares at her in amazement (once he is sober) and says she wears the wrong clothes: under all that stringy YCL hair, lumpy blouse and skirt and sensible shoes, she is really GORGEOUS!

Alehvai! *Alvah Bessie*

Alvah Bessie is a novelist, critic, screenwriter, veteran of the international Brigade in the Spanish "Civil" War and was a member of the so-called Hollywood Ten and therefore spent a year in jail and 20 years on the blacklist. His last two books: Inquisition in Eden *(about that episode) and* The Symbol *(novel). Made a film in Spain of all places in 1967.*

D.W. Griffith: His Life and Work by Robert M. Henderson. Oxford University Press, New York. 1972. 326 pages. $10.95, in Canada, $12.25.

This biography is another of those dubious film books written by people who have presumably never seen, and apparently have no interest in seeing, the films they write about. They spend a lot of time going through dusty old business records, old movie reviews, and highly subjective interviews with prop men and fading movie stars.

Like Bob Dylan's recent biographers, Griffith's biographers seem more interested in pulling the great down to the level of the pedestrian than in investigating the positive sources of creativity. That Griffith shared the same human weaknesses as you or me surely accounts for the loving poignancy with which he painted the human condition. That Griffith's vision saw beyond the ordinary in ordinary life (into the more noble mythology of the nature of existence) accounts for his being able to raise mere observation of life into the transcendence of art.

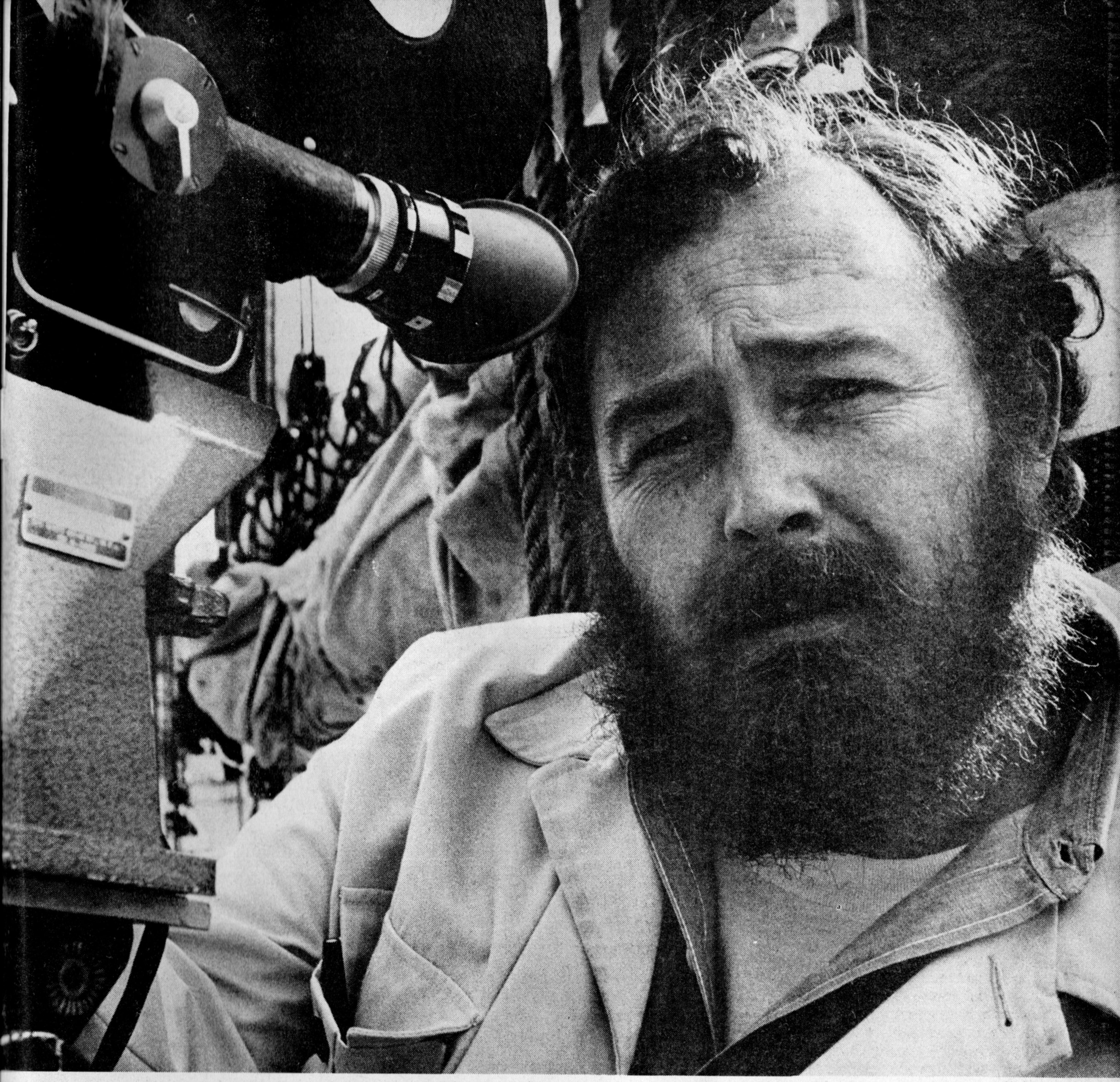
Yet this so-called biography does have some value in presenting details of Griffith's rocky business affairs (which were the main factor in bringing his career to an early end in 1931). On the other hand, Henderson mindlessly perpetuates many of the myths about Griffith that historians have been repeating for years, and that only re-evaluation of the films themselves will repudiate.

Henderson gives the impression that many of Griffith's features no longer exist. He specifically states that prints of **Scarlet Days** (1919) and **The Sorrows of Satan** (1926) are lost. Actually, prints of both of these films exist at the Museum of Modern Art (where Henderson did most of his research!) and have been screened publicly on both the East and West coasts in recent years. Only three of Griffith's 26 features made after **Intolerance** (1916) have yet to be rediscovered.

Henderson particularly maligns **The Greatest Question** (1919), going so far as to suggest that Griffith left its direction to his assistants. In fact, it is a deeply felt and poetic film, considered by those who have seen it as one of Griffith's most personal and moving. The third of Griffith's Kentucky trilogy, **The Greatest Question** is a more complex working of the themes and characters developed in **A Romance of Happy Valley** and **True Heart Susie.**

Obviously unaware of the remarkable performances of Carol Dempster in many of Griffith's less financially successful films, Henderson prefers to perpetuate the myth that Griffith was blinded by his real-life infatuation for Dempster, and "refused to see Dempster's failings as an actress." The contrary is more probably true: Griffith was inspired by his love of Dempster to an ever deepening rendering of his vision of womanhood. Dempster was to Griffith as Ingrid Bergman was to Rossellini, Anna Karina to Godard, and Giulietta Masina to Fellini.

There are also straight factual mistakes that could be mentioned, but few readers are going to be concerned that Henderson credits Griffith with the scenarios of only two of his Triangle-produced films when, in fact, Griffith's pseudonym can be found on at least ten of these films. Actually, Henderson has managed to construct a 300-page book out of material that is usually consigned to footnotes. His mention of the creative aspects of Griffith's life and work is casual, and thus all the more insulting. *John H. Dorr*



"We weren't looking for awards ... but as soon as we saw the rushes, we all felt we had a winner ... and as it turned out, we were right ... I worked harder on that film than any I've ever shot ... maybe it's because I had more freedom ... the director trusted my judgment and used me as his eyes and sounding board ... we pored over movies and stills for months, looking for that flat, shallow effect in the images ... I used special lenses to capture the same kind of visual texture on film ... and we took no chances with film quality, either ... we used the total Eastman Color System throughout—from first negs to final release prints ... and this included Eastman's technical help whenever we needed it ... and it really paid off—not only at the festivals, but at the box office ... and that's what it's all about ..."

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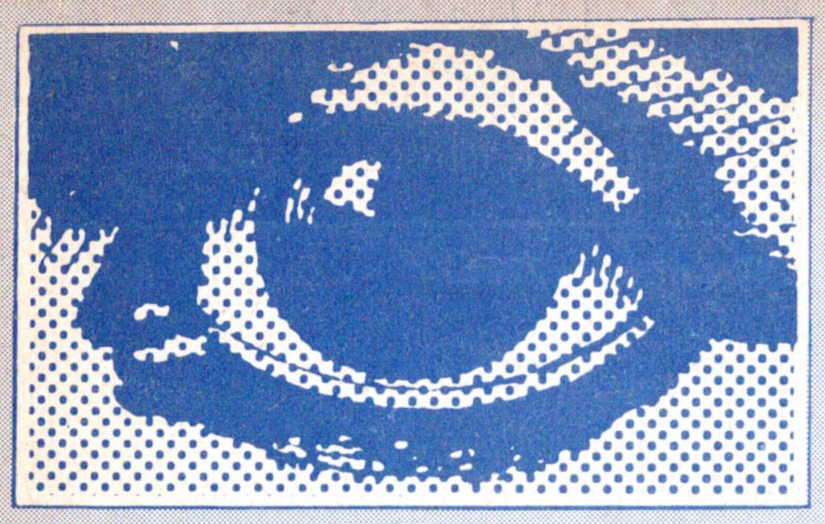

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U.S. film-makers: mekas, bartlett, bartlett, brakhage, emshwiller, lawder, lipton, breer, nelson and nelson, sharits, de hirsch, dewitt, abrams, rubin, kennedy, johnson, schwartz and knowlton, brandon, bienstock, yellow ball workshop, kuchar, rosen, dell, mclaughlin, bass and many more.

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